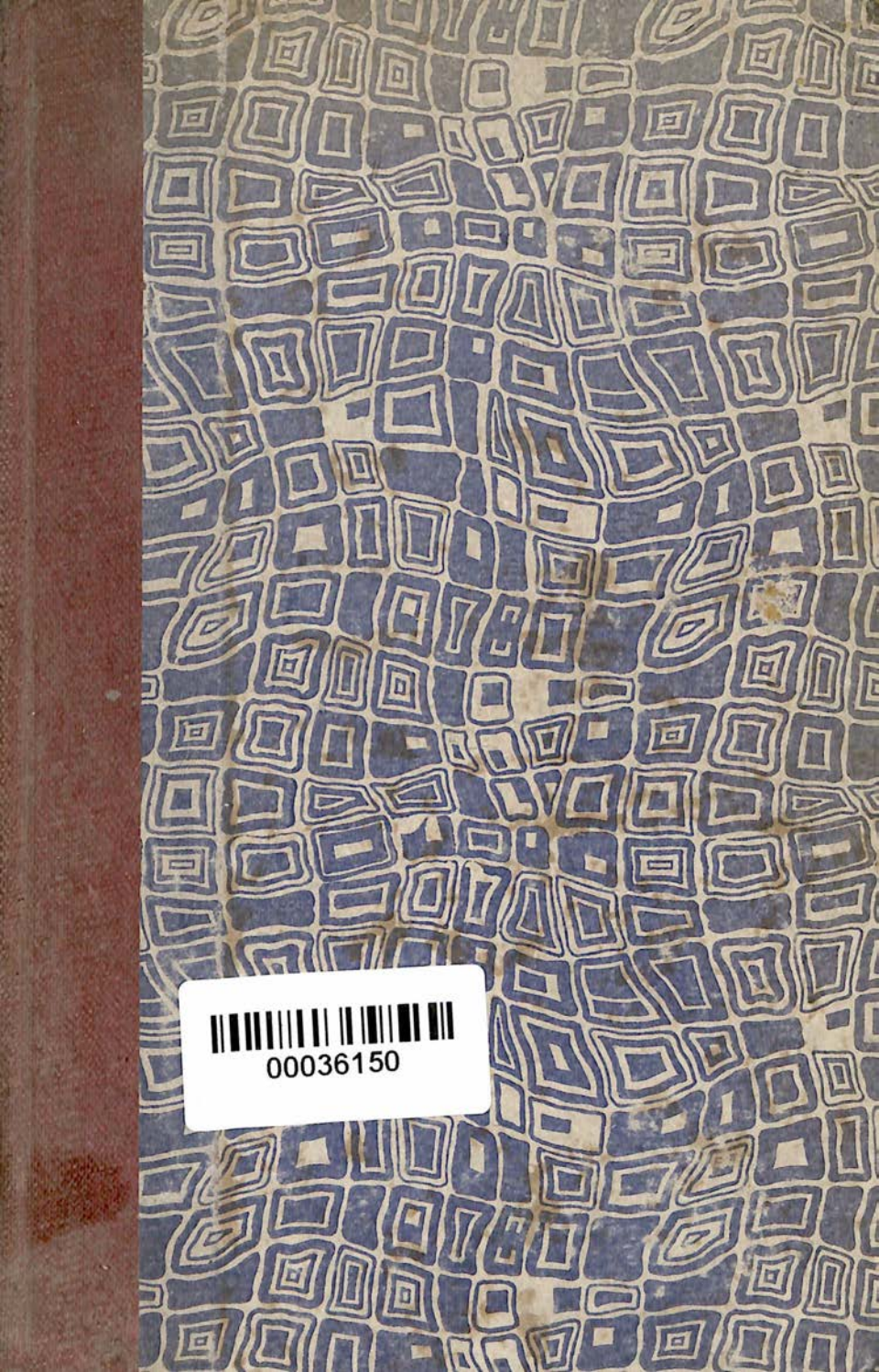
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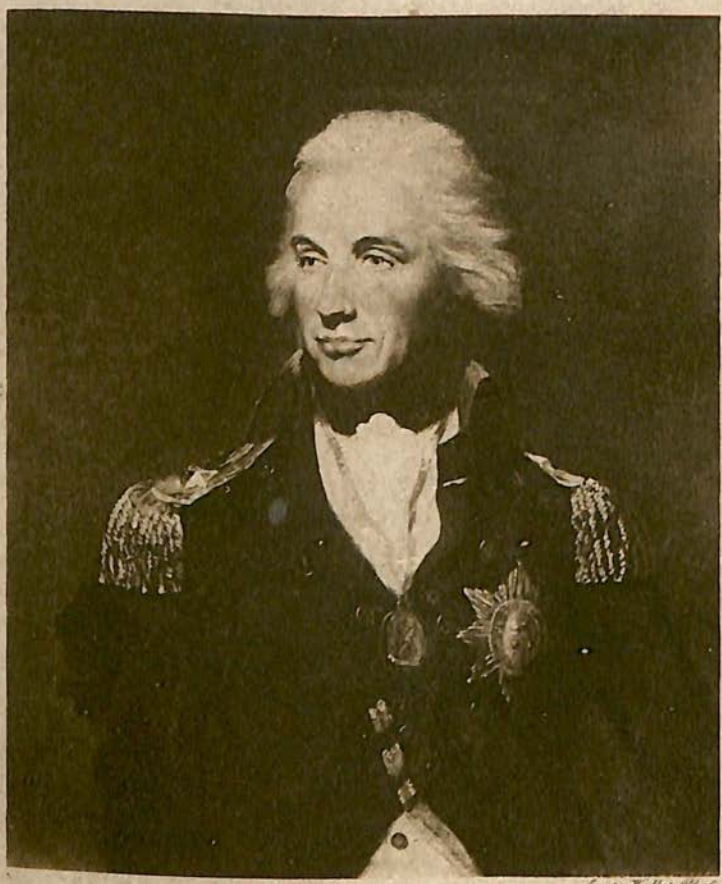
A CENTURY OF EMPIRE

1801–1900

VOL. I



Horatio Viscount Nelson.

From the painting by Lemuel Francis Abbott

LONDON EDWARD ARNOLD 1908

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A CENTURY OF EMPIRE

1801-1900

BY

THE RIGHT HON.

SIR HERBERT MAXWELL, BART.

F.R.S., D.C.L., LL.D.

36150 ac

"God of our fathers, known of old,
Lord of our far-flung battle-line,
Beneath whose awful hand we hold
Dominion over palm and pine—
Lord God of Hosts, be with us yet,
Lest we forget—lest we forget!"

RUDYARD KIPLING.

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IN THREE VOLUMES

VOL. I. 1801-1832

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LONDON

EDWARD ARNOLD

1909

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Dedicated with affectionate regard to my leader in many a hard-fought campaign, the Right Hon. ARTHUR JAMES BALFOUR, M.P., *than whom no statesman has done more to preserve the honour of Parliament, the dignity of debate, and the reasonable influence of party.*

PREFACE

MANKIND, toiling up the vast slopes of Time, with little prospect of agreeing as to their Whence and Whither, make effort, at least, to establish some notion as to their Whereabouts. We of Europe, not content with the natural notation by years and seasons, months and days, still less so with the accidental one by dynasties and reigns, have devised for our need the arbitrary fashion of bundling time into centuries. So deeply has this method of mapping history settled itself in civilised habit of thought, that we have come to regard centuries past and future as actual cosmic entities, instead of a convenient trick of numeration. The impression of reality has been confirmed to citizens of the British Empire by the near coincidence of certain events, profoundly affecting its constitution, with the opening of each of the last few hundred-year cycles. Thus in 1603 the union of the crowns of England and Scotland brought to a close that weary, wasteful warfare between two nations which were never meant to be but one. Who can measure the mutual benefit they have derived from the legislative union which followed in 1707, restoring to the weaker realm resources so cruelly drained in the struggle for independence, and bringing to the stronger one the support of a frugal, industrious, and warlike people? A third momentous stage was reached in the first year of the nineteenth century, when the legislative union of Great Britain and Ireland rounded off the evolution of the United Kingdom, a far-reaching act of state, concerning which—its manner of doing and its result when done—unanimity of opinion still tarries.

Again: the dawn of the twentieth century borrowed effulgence from the setting of a great luminary. Of all the monarchs who have reigned in these islands, none has won

such an unanimous meed of praise as Queen Victoria; and that, not only from her own subjects, but from every civilised community. The more closely future historians shall scrutinise her life-work, the more surely will they feel constrained to proclaim the unswerving rectitude of her public acts—the beauty of her private character—the sagacity with which she adapted the dignity and functions of the Crown to rapid political change—the influence she had in restoring confidence in the monarchical institution.

In the whole British chronicle, then, no span of one hundred years seems more clearly marked out as a definite political and social era than the Nineteenth Century; yet would no task be more surely futile than an attempt to follow its history except as part of what had gone before. That has been dug into, shovelled into heaps, the very foundations laid bare; there is scarcely an open act or secret motive of our dead rulers that has not been annotated, connotated, scrutinised, from every view-point, exposed in printed correspondence, much also still unprinted, staggering to survey. No human being of ordinary circumstances can draw understanding from such a multitudinous source. He may behold, indeed, this vast Sahara of information, this boundless contiguity of research, not likely to dwindle, rather to widen with the ages; but having his own garden, little or large, to cultivate, what knowledge comes to him must be laid at its very pale, and in manageable supply, else he will have none of it. Can this be done, he will be so much the wiser—will even be the better gardener for it; nor are there lacking among his fellows those willing to work for him thus. It is no dullards' work to follow a clue through the legion manuscripts and private memoirs to which latter-day diligence has given access. In these, truth, elsewhere unattainable, certainly awaits a finder; but in matters historical we Britons have worn so long the coloured spectacles of Party, that the puzzle is to transmit a pure ray without sacrifice of sparkle.

Daring to review the dealings of fortune and fate with the British Empire during the Nineteenth Century, and the actions of those chief men who have managed—

perhaps at times mismanaged—its affairs, I am setting out with the resolve to be watchful lest inevitable prepossession stiffen into prejudice, and to err (for that, too, is inevitable) on the side of briefness rather than prolixity. Conscious, also, that while one earns small praise who waters a bottle of good wine till it fills a gallon, the attempt to force a quart of liquor into a pint pot generally ends in a sad mess.

HERBERT MAXWELL.

MONREITH, *August* 1909.

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ERRATUM

Pp. 95 and 96, *for* "Frederick, Prince of the Asturias,"
read "Ferdinand, Prince of Asturias."

A CENTURY OF EMPIRE

1801–1900

CHAPTER I

Pitt's Irish policy—Constitution of the Irish Parliament—The Union undertaken—and effected—The Roman Catholic claims—Pitt attempts emancipation—George III. puts down his foot—Pitt resigns—Insanity of George III.—Pitt abandons the Roman Catholics—The "King's Friends" administration—Their Irish policy.

YOUNG Pitt, "without experience sage," setting hand to the helm of State in 1783, saw in the condition of the Irish people matter of gravest outlook for the realm. Uppermost and blackest loomed the religious rock of offence; the Penal Laws shutting out five-sixths of Irishmen, as Roman Catholics, not only from Parliament and the polling-booths, but from army, navy, bench, bar, and municipal office. Every avenue to distinction, profit, or simple usefulness in the public service was barred by statute against persons of the proscribed faith; only in the matter of military service did the authorities wink discreetly, raising no objection to Papists offering themselves, which they did freely, as food for powder by land and sea. For those who devised this policy, which Pitt found running close upon its hundredth year, there shall be no word here of praise or blame. Sturdy, perhaps stolid, English Parliament-men had framed such measures as seemed, by their lights and to their common sense, best defence against mischief felt or foreseen. But the world had been moving since good Jacobites used to pledge bumpers to "the little gentleman in black"; the Guelphs could afford to forget that Papists had ever plotted; above all, tolerance was in the air—the early, balmy breath of it, at least, untainted as yet by blood-fumes from over the Straits of Dover. No

Pitt's Irish policy.

Protestant Englishman saw with clearer eye than Pitt's that the age of proscription was wound up; none other than he realised more fully the unwisdom—the deadly peril—of turning away the ablest heads and readiest hands in Ireland from the service of the State. Henceforth there shall be in that realm, as in our England and Scotland, perfect liberty in all things lawful (and let all things be lawful that do not diminish or vex the liberty of others)—perfect equality with English and Scots in religion, laws, and commerce. That, and nothing short of it, was Pitt's policy for Ireland. Given a free hand, he would have wrought it out in a single session.

But Pitt's hand, powerful, masterful as it was, was not free. What if the rival religions in Ireland, fetters struck off, went at each other's throat? What if George III., sturdy, vigilant Protestant, persisted in scruples about his coronation oath? What if the British Parliament should suddenly flinch, pricked into wakefulness by growls of No Popery! among their own people? All these were obstacles not lightly to be brushed aside.

The religious difficulty, as aforesaid, loomed uppermost: that should be set right, but not of a sudden. Grievances other than spiritual claimed earliest attention; to redress these, Pitt could count upon the King and Lord Chancellor Clare, both of whom stuffed finger in ear at the faintest whisper of emancipation. Here was the population of Ireland—little over two millions and a half—nearly four-fifths of them living in hovels of one hearth; cessed in rates and tithes for an abhorred Church, and in rent to landlords who, unless absentee, vied with each other in erecting magnificent mansions and filling them with bibulous guests. Lord Tyrone, observed Attorney-General Scott, had "not less than three score and ten at table every day in his new dining-room at Curraghmore." All the ingredients here of a bloody revolution, though the Protestant magnates dreamt not of it, lulled by the matchless good-humour and ready adulation of the most amiable peasantry in Europe. Thoughtful visitors to Ireland perceived that trouble was brewing. Secret confederacies did not swarm without meaning in every Irish province—White Boys, Right

Boys, Defenders among the Catholics; Peep-o'-day Boys, Protestant Boys, and Wreckers among the Protestants. No constabulary to keep these asunder; only soldiers, fitter to punish mischief than prevent it. "Ireland," wrote Lord Carlisle to Lord Auckland, "in its present state will pull down England. She is a ship on fire, and must either be cast off or extinguished." Pitt, with the fine spirit of four-and-twenty, would not flinch from the flames. Cast it off! not he. Misgovernment should be redressed, its evil consequence remedied; Ireland shall be a bulwark, not a breach in the fabric of empire. A new eirenicon, this, whereof we catch the keynote in one of Pitt's earliest letters (1784) to Thomas Orde, his first Irish Secretary:—

". . . With regard to the fisheries, on this subject as well as on any other relating to commerce, nothing will certainly be done in this country without considering how Ireland, as part of the Empire, will be affected by it."

In the poverty of the Irish masses and their religious disabilities, Pitt beheld the double tap-root of sedition, which no force might drag from its hold, only wise husbandry sap and cause to wither. And where were the good husbandmen? Not in the Protestant Parliament of Ireland. For fifteen years he laboured earnestly with that instrument, and in vain. His commercial policy, designed to establish perfect freedom of trade and exchange between Great Britain and Ireland, was flung back in his face from St. Stephen's Green in 1784. The Act passed at his instance by that legislature in 1793, conferring the franchise upon Roman Catholics and redressing some of their educational grievances, was denounced by the Protestant oligarchy of Ireland as the direct cause of the rebellion of 1798, wherein 1600 of the King's soldiers and 11,000 of his rebellious subjects fell under arms and, as a consequence, 2000 rebels were either hanged or transported.[1]

It was the rebellion of '98 that clinched Pitt's conviction that Ireland could be rightly governed only by an

[1] Thus Newenham, a contemporary writer accepted by Lecky as most likely to be near the truth, although the estimate of certain others far exceeds these figures.

Imperial Parliament. What was it then, this Irish legislature—this Grattan's Parliament—whereof men even now cherish such fond memories—that it should stand in the way of union? Give it all credit for having put down the rebellion, and what esteem remained due to such an assembly? In what degree or respect was it a safeguard for the liberties of a Roman Catholic nation? Judge it upon its composition and the manner of its election. The face of Ireland was thickly peppered with rotten boroughs, once created to establish the authority of the Crown; but, by the middle of the eighteenth century, these had been bought up by a handful of Protestant landowners. Out of all the three hundred members composing the Irish House of Commons, one hundred and eighty-eight were nominees of fifty-two peers and thirty-four commoners, the families of Hill, Ponsonby, and Beresford between them controlling sixty seats. For fifteen years this Parliament had brought to nought Pitt's policy of conciliation: one only remedy remained.

Constitution of the Irish Parliament.

Time had been when the patient in his misery courted that remedy—the union of legislatures. Not when the masterful hand of Cromwell thrust it upon him at the cannon's mouth, and ranged thirty Irish and thirty Scottish members on the benches of the Commonwealth Parliament; but after the three legislatures had been severed again at the Restoration. Both the Irish chambers in 1703, and the Irish House of Commons in 1707, had petitioned their Sovereign for legislative union with England. This might have been effected then with hearty concurrence of practically all leaders of Irish opinion, and with far less popular antipathy than had to be encountered in the case of Scotland. But English commercial and agricultural jealousy prevailed to blight that golden occasion. Unite the Parliaments, and away go all our niggardly fiscal safeguards against Irish goods and cattle. We must live, you see, and grow fat: how may that be if we are to compete with folk who work for such preposterously low wages? So Irish overtures were set coldly aside. A century was allowed for prejudice of race and religion to distil its devil's-brew and vested interest to strike deep its roots.

The last throes of rebellion had scarcely died away when, on 21st December 1798, George III.'s cabinet resolved:— The Union undertaken, 1798.

"That the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland shall be instructed to state without delay to all persons with whom he may have communication on the subject, that his Majesty's Government is decided to press the measure of an Union as essential to the well-being of both countries, and particularly to the security and peace of Ireland, as dependent on its connection with Great Britain, to the utmost, and will even in the case (if it should happen) of any present failure be renewed on every occasion till it succeed, and that the conduct of individuals on this subject will be considered as the test of the disposition to support the King's Government."

Like Kaiser Sigismund, English State draftsmen are *super grammaticam*. Niceties of grammar, construction, and punctuation might have lent elegance to this memorable document; but the dogged purpose was clear enough as it stood. To trace the vicissitudes of the measure which, receiving the royal assent on 2nd July 1800, gave effect to that purpose, would lie beyond the limits of our century; yet must passing note be made of matters connected with it, much affecting the memory of its author.

First, it has often been made subject of reproach that the Union was carried by a Protestant Irish Parliament against the sense of the Roman Catholic hierarchy and people of Ireland. The reverse is the truth. It was the Irish Parliament that had to be bought up before effect could be given to the unanimous desire of the Irish Roman Catholic prelates. When Cornwallis took over the lieutenancy from Camden in 1799, he found the bishops bestirring themselves about addresses in favour of union—canvassing their people for signatures. Except in Dublin, where trade would suffer by the closing of Parliament, the Catholic priesthood and laity were generally of one mind in the matter with their bishops. Pitt had allowed it to be known that the Union, if carried, would be the preface to commutation of tithes and the abolition of disabilities: little hope was there of either from an Irish Parliament of Protestants. Let us then be quit of that for ever!

It suits certain politicians of the present day to execrate the Act of Union as forced upon Catholic Ireland by Protestant Britain. The charge cannot lie. It was the Protestant ruling class, lords of the Irish Parliament and their nominees in the House of Commons, who fought the bill so bitterly—Tories, lest their power should be swamped in an Imperial legislature and two-thirds of their good, marketable rotten boroughs swept away—Whigs, partly from honest pride in national independence, partly from genuine dread of increased absenteeism—Tories and Whigs alike, because of the inevitable abolition of countless snug offices of profit, to which Protestants held an exclusive title.

Second: Pitt has been censured for postponing a settlement of the Roman Catholic claims until the Union should be accomplished. Emancipation was inseparable from his design. He considered it just; he knew it to be expedient; but to persist in forcing it against the whole Protestant party in Ireland would drive the Union beyond the bounds of possibility. So at least Lord Clare, Irish Lord Chancellor, coming express from Ireland for the purpose, succeeded in convincing the Prime Minister. He found the Cabinet, he said, "full of Popish plots," but he succeeded in his mission, to the chagrin of many thoughtful persons. Canning, an Irish Protestant, not less eager for the Union than Clare, urged Pitt to drop it rather than pass it without emancipation. Cornwallis declared the opportunity to be the only one "which the British Ministry can have of obtaining any credit from the boon, which must otherwise in a short time be extended to them."[1]

Elliot, Under-Secretary to Cornwallis, resigned his seat in the Irish Parliament rather than vote for the maintenance of disabilities. But Pitt, seized of the imperative necessity for union, pledged himself to the repeal of disabilities so soon as it should be accomplished, and pressed forward his measure, thus irremediably shorn of all grace. For Cornwallis's "short time" lengthened into a term of thirty years: "the boon" was jealously withheld, till it was wrenched as a booty from Wellington by the resolute free-holders of County Clare. Account will be rendered

[1] Cornwallis *Correspondence*, ii. 418.

presently of Pitt's failure to redeem his pledge, and the reasons for it.

Third: Much shrill fuss has been heard, much fine invective wasted, over the means which the Minister sanctioned—contrived, if you will—to secure the passage of his measure through the Irish Parliament. But in judging him, let there be kept in mind the established conditions of public life at the close of the eighteenth century. Seats in the unreformed House of Commons—British quite as much as Irish—were recognised as marketable chattels until the Act of 1809—a kind of private property to be respected as scrupulously as any other form of investment. Dealings in these between buyer and seller were perfectly open and above-board. So late as 1832, Lord Eldon maintained that "they might as well extinguish the right of private individuals in their advowsons, as their right to exercise the privilege which they derived from burgage tenures." Pitt, therefore, had to play the game by the recognised rules, or throw up the cards. Just as he had made provision in his English Reform Bill of 1785 to compensate the owners of such boroughs as were to be extinguished, so would he deal with the owners of eighty Irish boroughs which were to be wiped out, with their 160 members. The price fixed was £15,000 apiece—£1,260,000 in all. We have been summoned to shudder at such wholesale corruption; but how should that be denounced as bribery which impartially indemnified supporters and opponents of the Union? It so happened that the heaviest payment of all was made to Lord Downshire, who received £52,500 for his seven seats, yet Lord Downshire conscientiously and vehemently opposed the Bill in all its stages. English money has been employed to ransom worse offences to humanity than borough-mongering. When Parliament decreed that slavery should cease, it did not boggle over the price. At all events it treated the slave-owners more equitably than Henry VIII. did the monasteries.

Small need to defend the authors of the Union, had this been the sum of their offence; but work of another kind was needed to drive the measure through—work inseparable from the common usage of the time, but detest-

able to honest men in all ages. It turned the stomach of war-worn old Cornwallis—"How I long to kick those whom my public duty obliges me to court!" The only thing that carried him through it was "the reflection that, without the Union, the British Empire must be dissolved."

It was part of the game—it was according to the practice, if not the theory, of the Constitution—that the member for a close borough should vote as his patron dictated, or else vacate the seat. Many borough patrons named their price: not in cash, please! we have our principles and self-respect; but a peerage, now, or promotion for our stripling soldier son, or preferment for the parson one; even pensions for needy relatives are a very delicate form of acknowledgment for timely service.

So it went on. An example: The Earl of Ely had a right to high opinion of his importance, for not only did he command seven seats of his own, but he had hired the patronage of several others. Six of his own seats would disappear the day the Union came into being: for these he would receive the statutory price of £45,000;[1] but "if I employ these seats, while they exist, to support the measure of your Majesty's Ministers, surely I am entitled to expect some token of your Majesty's favour. Abolish the Irish House of Lords, and what am I? If your Majesty should think me worthy of an English peerage, I should still be able to serve you as a legislator. The compliment would be still greater if your Majesty should also convert my Irish earldom into a marquisate." Such is the essence of his lordship's correspondence. He wavered long, because George III. boggled over the marquisate; but in the end his nominees trooped into the Aye lobby. Next year Ely blossomed into an Irish marquess, and took his seat at Westminster as a baron of the United Kingdom, entitled to transmit his seat in the legislature to the offspring of his loins *in sæcla sæclorum!*

Another form of jobbery was the bestowal of offices of profit upon members of the Opposition. Into every seat so vacated it was easy to pop a Government nominee. Dirtier

[1] The close borough of Wexford remained to him unaffected by the Act of Union.

work even than this probably went on; certainly one member who supported the Government was absolved from a debt of £3000; but of direct bribery by money payment there is a total absence of evidence. By the means employed, the Government obtained control over no less than sixty-three seats between the prorogation in 1799 and the meeting of the Irish Parliament in 1800.

All this sordid machinery had stood ready to Pitt's hand from the outset. Let there be no coyness in apology for his use of it. He had hoped to pass his measure with the intelligent assent of all grades in the people of Ireland; it was only when he found that the ruling class were resolved to wreck it that he had recourse to the sole arguments which could touch their understanding.

On the first day of the nineteenth century the Act of Union came into force, and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland took its place among the nations. Maimed as was the design of its author of the conciliatory provisions which he had hoped to include in it, the warning of Cornwallis, in forwarding to Westminster the address of the Irish Parliament in reply to his message as Lord Lieutenant, has been fulfilled to the letter. "The word Union will not cure the evils of this wretched country. It is a necessary preliminary, but a great deal more must be done." A truer forecast, this, than Grey's when he told the British House of Commons that "ultimately, at least, the Irish members would afford a certain accession of force to the party of every administration," and that "their weight would be thrown into the increasing scale of the Crown." On these grounds he moved the reduction of Irish representatives from one hundred to eighty-five, little foreseeing that he should owe to the support of these very Irish members his success in passing the Reform Act of 1832.

The Union effected, 1801.

Throughout Ireland, except its Parliament, which had to be coaxed and forced to accept the Union, the change was received quietly, almost with indifference. Even in Dublin, where lawyers and placemen raised a clamour, the populace showed nothing but good-humour.[1] Preparations

[1] Cornwallis *Correspondence*, iii. 270, 291.

had been made to deal with disturbance which never arose. Nothing seemed wanting to the complete success of Pitt's policy, but the remedial measures known to be in contemplation. It is of moment, not only to Pitt's reputation, but to the credit of British statesmanship, to understand, first, how far the Government were pledged to such measures; and second, what interfered with their accomplishment.

The Roman Catholic claims.

In regard to the first—the degree in which the Catholic hierarchy and people of Ireland were entitled to claim emancipation as the fulfilment of a pact—that can be read nowhere more clearly and succinctly than in a letter written by Castlereagh on 1st January 1801 (the very day the Union came into being). Therein he set forth, for the refreshment of Pitt's memory, the exact instructions he, Castlereagh, had received from the Cabinet. There had been a time, the Irish Parliament having thrown out the first Union Bill in 1799, when the Roman Catholics seemed to waver in their support of the measure. In the absence of Grattan, John Foster, Speaker of the Irish House of Commons, became foremost opponent of the Union, and tried to secure the Roman Catholics to his cause by promising them emancipation if they would help to retain an independent Parliament in Ireland.[1] Castlereagh went to London in the autumn to explain the danger of this manœuvre, and attended a meeting of the Cabinet, when—

. . . "I represented," he wrote to Pitt, "that the friends of the Government, by flattering the hopes of the Catholics, had produced a favourable impression in Cork, Tipperary, and Galway; but that in proportion as his Excellency [Lord Cornwallis] had felt the advantage of this popular support, he was anxious to be ascertained [*sic*], in availing himself of the assistance which he knew was alone given in contemplation of its being auxiliary to their views, that he was not involving the Government in any future difficulties with that body by exposing them to a charge of duplicity; and he was peculiarly desirous of being secure against such a risk before he *personally* encouraged the Catholics to come forward, and to afford him that assistance which he felt to be so important to the success of the measure. In consequence of this representation, the Cabinet took the measure into their consideration; and, having been directed to attend the meeting, I was charged to convey to Lord Cornwallis the result. . . . Accordingly, I com-

[1] Castlereagh *Correspondence*, ii. 132; Cornwallis *Correspondence*, iii. 52.

municated to Lord Cornwallis that the opinion of the Cabinet was favourable to the principle of the measure; that some doubt was entertained as to the possibility of admitting Catholics into some of the *higher offices*, and that Ministers apprehended considerable repugnance to the measure in many quarters, and particularly in the *highest*; but that, as far as the sentiments of the Cabinet were concerned, his Excellency need not hesitate in calling forth the Catholic support, in whatever degree he found it practicable to obtain it. . . . I certainly did not then hear any direct objection stated against the principle of the measure by any one of the Ministers then present. You will, I have no doubt, recollect that, so far from any serious hesitation being entertained in respect to the principle, it was even discussed whether an immediate declaration to the Catholics would not be advisable, and whether an assurance should not be distinctly given them in the event of the Union being accomplished, of their objects being submitted, with the countenance of Government, to the United Parliament upon a peace. This idea was laid aside principally upon the consideration that such a declaration might alienate the Protestants in both countries from the Union in a greater degree than it was calculated to assist the measure through the Catholics, and accordingly the instructions which I was directed to convey to Lord Cornwallis were to the following effect:—That his Excellency was fully warranted in soliciting every support the Catholics could afford; that he need not apprehend, as far as the sentiments of the Cabinet were concerned, being involved in the difficulty with that body which he seemed to apprehend; that it was not thought expedient at that time to give any direct assurance to the Catholics; but that, should circumstances so far alter as to induce his Excellency to consider such an explanation necessary, he was at liberty to state the grounds on which his opinion was formed, for the consideration of the Cabinet.

"In consequence of this communication, the Irish Government omitted no exertion to call forth the Catholics in favour of the Union. Their efforts were very generally successful, and the advantage derived from them was highly useful. . . . His Excellency was enabled to accomplish his purpose without giving the Catholics any direct assurance of being gratified, and, throughout the contest, earnestly avoided being driven to such an expedient, as he considered a gratuitous concession after the measure as infinitely more consistent with the character of Government."[1]

The frank and honourable nature of Lord Cornwallis is absolute guarantee that no explicit pledge was given to the Roman Catholics; nevertheless, short of that, they were fully justified in expecting the fulfilment of their desires as

[1] Castlereagh *Correspondence*, iv. 8–12. The whole of this letter is of the first importance to understanding the position.

an inseparable consequence of the Union. This expectation affected their conduct as powerfully as any written pledge could have done. Did not the great English Minister hold the Imperial Parliament in the hollow of his hand? who could doubt his power to carry what was so well known to be his will?

Aye, but both Pitt and the Irish Catholics overlooked or underrated another influence, one that, in prevailing over Pitt and Parliament, poisoned the relation between England and Ireland for at least a century to come.

Pitt attempts emancipation, Sept. 1800.

Pitt lost no time in the matter. In September 1800, three months and more before the Act of Union took effect, he called upon his colleagues to take into consideration the Roman Catholic claims. For the first time in that Cabinet, a jarring note was heard. Lord Chancellor Loughborough, who had assented to the instructions given to Castlereagh, now raised protest against any concession whatever, except tithe commutation. He did much more: without the knowledge of his colleagues, and therefore treacherously to them, he privily warned the King to be on his guard against what they were doing.

Now, George III. had inherited from his Protestant ancestry a concentrated distrust of the Church of Rome and all its works. Moreover, his circumscribed intellect could not distinguish between the nature of a personal vow and a constitutional oath. He had sworn at his coronation to maintain the disabilities of Roman Catholics, and he denounced as casuistry every suggestion that Parliament, which had prescribed that oath, had power to absolve him from it. Besides, he had been kept grossly in the dark (be sure that Loughborough let him understand how much); the negotiations between Cornwallis and the Catholics had gone on without his knowledge. His Majesty was very angry.

George III. puts down his foot, Jan. 1801.

"What, what, what is this," he asked Dundas[1] at the levee on 28th January, "that this young lord [Castlereagh] has brought over, which they are going to throw at my head? I shall reckon any man my personal enemy who proposes any such

[1] Henry Dundas, Secretary for War and Colonies, created Viscount Melville in 1802.

measure. The most Jacobinical thing I have ever heard of!"[1] Whereupon Dundas, with broad northern drawl, tried to explain that Protestant ascendency was in no danger. "None of your Scotch metaphysics here, sir!" shouted the King.

Thus Pitt's hand was forced. Given the choice of occasion, he might have brought the King round. He could have shown him that the royal assent had never been withheld from the annual Bill of Indemnity for Protestant Dissenters who had taken office without subscribing the tests, although the coronation oath implied that all such persons should be required to receive the Holy Communion according to the rites of the Church of England. But Loughborough's treachery had hardened the King's heart against Pitt. When Pitt, three days after the levee aforesaid, submitted his plan for the admission of Catholics and Dissenters to offices and of Catholics to Parliament, subject to tests safeguarding the Established Churches, he declared that his opinion was "unalterably fixed" that this was "the best chance of giving full effect to the great object of the Union, that of tranquillising Ireland and attaching it to this country," and added that he should be compelled to resign his office if he were not allowed to carry out the plan.[2] The King answered that his coronation oath prevented him from so much as discussing such proposals, and Pitt resigned straightway. So did Dundas, Grenville, Windham, Cornwallis, Castlereagh, Spencer, and Canning. King George, on the brink of a fit of insanity, sent for Speaker Addington, who, after consulting with his friend Pitt and receiving earnest assurance of support, undertook to form a ministry. Many and various judgments have been passed upon Pitt's conduct in this crisis. "He has acted most magnanimously and patriotically," wrote Wilberforce to Lord Muncaster; but Fox discerned in it "a notorious juggle"—a desire to escape from office, till such time as the tool Addington should have settled the terms of a precarious peace with France: nay worse, that Pitt, having fulfilled the letter of his bargain by proposing

Pitt resigns, Feb. 1801.

[1] Wilberforce's *Life*, iii. 7.

[2] Stanhope's *Life of Pitt*, iii.; Appendix, xxiii.–xxviii.

emancipation, intended to displace his nominee and return to power after a decent interval. "The common insinuation," wrote Cooke[1] from Dublin, "is that Mr. Pitt's going out now is a trick—a German quarrel."[2] Later events lent colour to this dishonouring suspicion. Hear one of the retiring ministers at the moment. "The motives," said Dundas to Mackintosh, "which I and my colleagues have assigned for our resignation, drawn from the Popery question, no historian will believe; and if any mentions it, he will treat it as a mere pretext to cover the real motive; and he will support his representation by very plausible arguments. Yet nothing can be more true than that the reason we assigned was the real one."[3]

Cornwallis had hoped to the last. "If Mr. Pitt is firm," he wrote on 14th January, "he will meet with no difficulty;" but Cornwallis reckoned without knowledge of Loughborough's betrayal and its effect. Castlereagh, loyal as he was to Pitt, blamed him for want of persistence in bringing the King to terms. In later times, Mr. Lecky has held that Pitt ought to have persevered, and perceived "little doubt that he could have carried his policy."[4] Possibly, but at what cost? Ever since 1788, George III. had lain under the shadow of insanity. The mere stirring of the Catholic question proved how little might turn the shadow into terrible reality. From 18th February till 6th March the King was raving mad. Is it suggested that Pitt, even supposing him divested of all ordinary humane forbearance for his master, should have waited for the King's recovery to revive the disturbing controversy, with the certainty of bringing on a relapse? Pitt might then have obtained from a Regent what he had failed to extract from the King. He preferred to let nature take its course, for no business man would have insured King George's life at that time on the expectation of a couple of years.

Madness of George III., 18th Feb.–6th Mar. 1801.

Again, it has been surmised that the resignation was a

[1] Edward Cooke, Under-Secretary for Ireland.
[2] Castlereagh *Correspondence*, iv. 51.
[3] *Life of Sir J. Mackintosh*, i. 170.
[4] *History of England*, viii. 512.

mere feint, adopted as the surest means of bringing the King to terms and in the belief that it would not be accepted. Pitt knew George III. far too well to resort to any such strategem, even had he been disposed to it. The whole mystery is the creation of minds which seek for hidden and insincere motives, where the real ones lie open to view—to prefer a chain of circumstantial evidence in support of a preconceived theory to the plain statement of the man himself. There is not the slightest justification for going behind the terms in which Pitt announced his retirement to his brother, Lord Chatham:—

". . . Under these circumstances, with the opinion I had formed and after all that had passed, I had no option, and had nothing left but to consider how I could execute the resolution which became unavoidable, at a time and in a mode likely to produce as little embarrassment as possible. I hope on considering them you will think what I have done has been right towards the King, the public, and my own character."[1]

Conscious of his mistake in delaying to apprise the King before becoming morally bound to the Catholics, Pitt perceived that now he would have to fight, not only the King and the English bishops, but the whole weight of Protestant feeling in England that would be roused by the conflict. He therefore took the only course consistent at once with his sense of honour and with his conception of the public weal—he resigned, with the intention of lending his "most uniform and diligent support"[2] to a successor who should carry out his policy in every respect save one.

It is not so easy either to understand or to justify Pitt's subsequent conduct in regard to the Catholic claims. The King, on recovering from his derangement, commanded Dr. Willis to inform Pitt that he was quite well again, "but what has he not to answer for who has been the cause of my being ill at all?" Pitt's rejoinder was to send the King his assurance that he would never again stir the Catholic question during his Majesty's reign. He did more: he allowed the Duke of Portland to

Pitt abandons the Catholics.

[1] February 5, 1801. Quoted by Lord Ashbourne (*Pitt*, 310) from the Pretyman MSS.

[2] Ibid.

let it be understood that he, Pitt, was ready to resume the office he had quitted but a month before.[1] Was this the gauge of his conviction of the justice of the Catholic claims? of the urgency for granting them? of the extent of his own obligation to press them? I do not believe it. Mr. Lecky brushes aside the hypothesis that Pitt acted under a sense of remorse for the effect of his past action upon the King's intellect, because he was not the man to be swayed by "uncalculating emotion";[2] but, short of that, it does not tax the imagination severely to suppose that Pitt perceived greater advantage to the empire in a sane sovereign than in a rabid one, and, of two evils, chose the less, namely, to postpone to the close of the monarch's precarious life carrying into effect a project which he never abandoned.[3]

As to the informal intimation that he was ready to resume office—"the King's Government had to be carried on," and nobody felt much confidence in Addington for the task. Pitt allowed his willingness to be known, though it cannot be denied that it was wholly inconsistent with his declaration in Parliament not three weeks before (16th February) that he and his colleagues had felt it "equally inconsistent with their duty and their honour" to hold office without bringing forward a measure of Catholic relief.[4]

However, seeing that neither Addington showed any disposition to resign in his favour, nor the King any desire that he should do so, Pitt on 10th March restrained the Duke of Portland from making any proposal to Addington,[5]

[1] Lord Colchester's *Diary*, i. 245; Stanhope's *Life of Pitt*, iii. 302–304; Lord Malmesbury's *Correspondence*, iv. 32.

[2] *History of England*, viii. 524.

[3] Bishop Tomline, after an interview with Pitt in December 1801, wrote: "Upon the Catholic question our conversation was less satisfactory. He [Pitt] certainly looks forward to the time when he may carry that point, and I fear he does not wish to take office again, unless he could be permitted to bring it forward and to be properly supported."

[4] Stanhope's *Life of Pitt*, iii. 386, 303–6; Malmesbury's *Correspondence*, iv. 31. Consult also Canning's remarkable letter, 8th March 1801, quoted by Lord Ashbourne (*Pitt*, 319) from the Pretyman MSS., in which he strongly urges Pitt to "withdraw his resignation" a month after Addington had taken office. It is remarkable that, of those colleagues who had resigned with him, Dundas alone received any intimation of Pitt's desire to resume the government.

[5] See Dundas's letter to Pelham, quoted by Lord Ashbourne (*Pitt*, 332) from the Pelham MSS. in the British Museum.

and settled down as a private member and staunch supporter of the reconstructed Cabinet.

For many weeks it remained doubtful whether a Regency was not inevitable after all. The excitement of investing the new Ministers in their offices threw the King into a relapse. His condition was carefully concealed from the public, but it is now well known that he remained in seclusion at Kew till the end of June, unable to see either his Ministers or his own family.[1] When, at last, he did recover control of his mental faculties at the end of June, he was well pleased to be relieved from his terrible Minister.[2] Addington, unkindly sketched by Canning as an example of those administrators who

> "Very little mean,
> But mean that little well,"

was one of those respectable mediocrities whom circumstances sometimes conspire to thrust into prominence during the eclipse of more powerful luminaries. "A man of talents and integrity," was Wilberforce's estimate at the time, "and of generous feelings, but not qualified for such rough and rude work as he may have to encounter."[3] He was at his prime, being in his forty-fourth year, and had occupied the Speaker's chair for twelve years. The House of Commons, ever merciless in the bestowal of nicknames, dubbed him "the Doctor," his father having been physician to the elder Pitt. Had fate been kind, he should have been remembered as one of the best of Speakers, instead of one of the most forlorn of Premiers.

The "King's Friends" Administration, 1801–4.

Forlorn, in that it was Addington's destiny to figure as makeshift at a vital crisis of British history, and to be superseded so soon as the one great act of his administration—the Treaty of Amiens—had been torn up, and men sought more masterly guidance through the hurricane that followed.

[1] See letter from Fox to Lauderdale, 15th March 1804 (*Memoirs of Fox*, iv. 24).

[2] George III. never liked Pitt, though he feared and respected him. Writing to him in 1804, the King said: "Mr. Pitt, of whose services none has been more predominant than the proposing of Mr. Addington, then a young man, for Speaker of the House of Commons."

[3] Wilberforce's *Life*, iii. 2.

The Irish policy of "the King's Friends"—as the Addington Cabinet was termed—was rigidly Protestant; reflecting in this not only the mind of George III. but the prevailing sentiment throughout England and Scotland. Seventy years of statutory toleration have inclined us to regard as prejudice what our forefathers cherished as principle; we have learnt, at least, to abstain from despising as bigots the more earnest disciples of any creed that does not happen to be our own; yet methinks we should be slow to blame the men of that generation for their jealousy of the Church of Rome. Those were still living who had witnessed the heir of a Popish dynasty carry his victorious arms into the very heart of England;[1] the British people were not yet ready to welcome into the Imperial legislature members of a Church whereof the pontiff —himself a temporal prince—claimed the right of appointing and deposing sovereign rulers. Still, it gives one pause to note how grievously some of those best versed in Irish affairs misconstrued the signs of the times. "I consider," wrote the diligent Cooke to that unbending Protestant, Lord Clare, "that neither the Presbyterian nor Catholic sect are new and rising, but ancient and decaying sects; that their enthusiasm (at least among the higher and educated orders) is worn out."[2]

Their Irish policy.

Clare died in January 1802, and his office of Irish Chancellor was filled, upon Eldon's advice, by Sir John Mitford, the Speaker who had succeeded Addington. Lord Hardwicke followed Cornwallis as Lord Lieutenant; the spirit of the new administration may be understood from a letter of his wife, wherein she claims credit for him as the only Viceroy "that has never given the heads of the Catholic clergy an invitation to the Castle: he in no way recognises them further than the law admits them to be priests."[3] Mitford, known as Lord Redesdale after assuming office, was almost brutally outspoken against the Catholics. He would not only refuse any concessions, but withdraw some that had been granted already.

[1] In 1745.

[2] Castlereagh *Correspondence*, iv. 45; Feb. 10, 1801.

[3] Lord Colchester's *Diary*, i. 441.

The Catholics of Ireland had been encouraged to look to the Union for admission to equality with the rest of the King's subjects. What they received was a distant Imperial Parliament instead of a national one on Irish soil—a Hardwicke instead of a Cornwallis, a Mitford instead of a Clare. Punic faith, it seemed, bringing dark distrust upon King George's Ministers and heritage of hate for generations to come.

CHAPTER II

The position of Great Britain in Europe—The Armed Neutrality revived—Great distress in Britain—Expedition to the Baltic—Battle of Copenhagen—Assassination of the Emperor Paul II.—Convention with the Northern Powers—Expedition to Egypt—Battle of Alexandria and death of Abercromby—Expulsion of the French from Egypt—The Peace of Amiens—Singular debate upon Mr. Pitt's conduct—The question of Malta—The Government prepares for war—War declared with France—Estrangement of Pitt and Addington—Imminence of invasion—Attitude of the British nation—General quiet in Ireland—Emmet's rising.

ON 1st January 1801, Horatio Lord Nelson was promoted vice-admiral, an event not merely of personal or professional interest, but, as the country was speedily to learn, of national moment.

The position of Great Britain in Europe, 1801.

For nearly nine years Great Britain had been at war; but the great coalition of Powers, with whom she had undertaken the chastisement of revolutionary France, had fallen asunder. One after another they had been forced to lay down their arms or place them at the service of the French Directory. The armies of Austria had been crushed by Bonaparte at Marengo (14th June 1800) and by Moreau at Hohenlinden (3rd December 1800); Russia's crazy Czar Paul II. had been won over by Bonaparte to effect the subjugation of England; the peace of Lunéville (9th February 1801) rid France of the last of her foes in the field, saving only Great Britain, upon whose destruction Bonaparte was now resolved.

Had Britain the means, with her population of bare fifteen millions, to stand alone against the storm? Her armies had proved no match, either for irregular forces, as in the American war, or for disciplined troops, as in the Duke of York's two deplorable campaigns in the Netherlands. On land, therefore, she might be reckoned an almost negligible quantity. Hitherto she had employed

her wealth in enabling foreign Powers to put armies in the field; nine millions of money had been applied in that manner in as many years, till the peace of Lunéville put an end to that resource.

But there was the sea. In 1797, Jervis had humbled the naval pride of Spain off Cape St. Vincent;. a few months later, Duncan had crushed the Dutch sea-power off Camperdown; and in the following year Nelson had converted the Mediterranean into a British lake by destroying the French fleet in Aboukir Bay.

England was mistress of the seas: her supremacy could only be shaken by a combination of all the maritime powers, and to this end Bonaparte now applied his state-craft. The materials lay ready to his hand. During all the appalling convulsions arising from the French revolution, Sweden and Denmark had succeeded in maintaining their neutrality; in order to draw them into the vortex, Bonaparte most dexterously availed himself of a long-standing grievance against Britain. During the American war, British officers, as belligerents, had exercised the right claimed under international law of searching neutral ships for contraband of war. To dispute and, if occasion arose, to resist this right by force, Russia, Sweden, and Denmark had combined in what was termed the Armed Neutrality. To avoid complications, the British Government refrained, during the rest of that war, from interference with neutral shipping; but without formally abandoning the right of search. The European war, breaking out in 1793, threw a large and profitable carrying trade into the hands of the neutrals, Sweden and Denmark. Great Britain having resumed the practice of search, the Danes endeavoured to protect their merchantmen by sending them in large convoys accompanied by ships of war, occasion of much irritation and of some serious conflicts between seamen of the two nations. The third and most formidable partner in the old Armed Neutrality, although nominally still in alliance with Great Britain, had been throughout the year 1800 the object of incessant attention and flattery on the part of the French Directory, and the British Cabinet had reason to view with

The Armed Neutrality, 1785, 1801.

so much distrust the military preparations going forward in Russia that they delayed handing over the island of Malta, which had been captured from the French, to the Emperor Paul, who claimed it as Grand Master of the Knights of St. John. This gave the Russian despot a colourable pretext to head a combination of the Baltic Powers against Great Britain. The Armed Neutrality was revived, with the important addition of Prussia. In December, Paul suddenly ordered the seizure of three hundred British merchantmen, then lying in Russian ports, imprisoned their officers and crews, and confiscated all British goods warehoused in his dominions. Diplomatic correspondence upon these matters was still in progress when Pitt quitted office in February; but preparations had been made to anticipate this conspiracy against the maritime power of Britain, whose warships might, indeed, have continued to sweep the seas for a time; but, had the confederacy been allowed to prevail, her merchant fleet, chief source of her objectionable wealth, might rot in her rivers with all the ports of northern Europe closed against it. Moreover, the design was clear that, so soon as the Baltic was free of ice, the fleets of the Armed Neutrality should assume the offensive, and combine with those of France and Spain to wrest from Britain her empire of the sea.

Great distress in Britain, 1801.

Cold must be his spirit who can read without a glow of the front his countrymen presented to this tremendous peril. Well that it had not been left to the pacific Addington to prepare against it. Pitt and Grenville had seen to that; the new ministry had only to allow the machinery to work. Yet it was a time when, if ever, the national spirit might have shown symptoms of flagging. Severe privation followed the wretched harvest of 1799 and 1800; during 1801 the average price of wheat was £5, 18s. 2d. a quarter;[1] the export trade was nearly extinguished by reason of the impoverishment of every European community; the burden of the war, which had already added three hundred

[1] *Annual Register*, 1801. At the present moment of writing the quotation is 30s. a quarter (*Times*, 23rd Sept. 1903).

millions sterling to the National Debt, lay grievously upon every industry and interest; bread riots broke out in London and the provinces; nevertheless, when Pitt, before he left office, made provision for a new loan of 27½ millions and imposed fresh taxes upon tea, timber, paper, horses, and a number of other articles, estimated to produce a million and a quarter, the House of Commons voted his budget almost without opposition. The Lords Hawkesbury, St. Vincent, and Hobart, who had succeeded Lord Grenville, Lord Spencer, and Mr. Dundas respectively at the Foreign Office, Admiralty, and War Office, relaxed none of the warlike preparations of their predecessors. A fleet of eighteen sail of the line, with frigates, lay at Yarmouth, ready to convey Mr. Vansittart, M.P., the British Plenipotentiary who was to deliver an ultimatum to the Danish Government, allowing them forty-eight hours to withdraw from the northern confederacy. Sir Hyde Parker commanded in chief, with Nelson as second in command, an arrangement containing some elements of catastrophe, for Parker was cold and slow and rather old, jealous of his subordinate, and treating him with studied want of consideration. Nelson, in return, was at no pains to disguise his opinion of the commander-in-chief.[1] He was quite in the dark as to Parker's plans, but gleaned what information he could from subordinate officers.

Expedition to the Baltic, March 1801.

"If they are the plans of Ministers," he wrote to Lady Hamilton, "they are weak in the extreme, and very different to what I understood from Mr. Pitt. If they originate with Sir Hyde, it makes him, in my mind, as——but never mind! your Nelson's plans are bold and decisive, all on the great scale. I hate your pen and ink men; a fleet of British ships of war are the best negociators in Europe."

The victor of the Nile breathed too high a spirit to brood over Parker's slights—nay, he determined to win his good graces. One day Nelson heard the lieutenant of his ship, the *St. George*, speak of a fine turbot he had seen caught on the Dogger Bank. "Let me know when we

[1] Mahan's *Life of Nelson*, ii. 65–69.

are on that ground," said he. Arrived there, Lieutenant Layman was told off to catch a turbot, which, after two or three failures, he managed to do—a small one. "Send it to Sir Hyde Parker with my compliments," was the next order. It was dark, with a heavy sea running; some risk, therefore, in sending out a boat. "Never mind," said Nelson, to the surprise of his officers, "I know the chief is fond of good living. He shall have the turbot!"

They little knew the value of that little fish: worth a million sterling for every pound of its weight. It may be deemed to have carried in its carcase the fate of the British Empire, for it brought into capable hands the execution of work upon which that fate for the instant depended. From the moment Sir Hyde Parker received the peace-offering he took the vice-admiral into some measure of confidence. "I staid an hour," wrote Nelson after his first interview with Parker on arriving off the coast of Denmark, "and ground out something, but there was not that degree of openness which I should have shown to my second in command."

The fleet anchored in the Kattegat on 20th March, Mr. Vansittart going forward in a frigate to present the demands of Great Britain. He returned on the 23rd to report flat refusal by the Danes. He described the batteries commanding the Sound and the defences of Copenhagen as having been made far more formidable than anything known to the Cabinet in London, and there is not the slightest reason to doubt that, if left to himself, Parker would have remained outside the Sound until the combined naval forces of the Baltic should come out to fight him—"a measure," wrote Nelson afterwards, "in my opinion, disgraceful to our country. I wanted to get at an enemy as soon as possible to strike a *home* stroke." Sir Hyde Parker called a council of war. It is not often that such a council ends in fighting; but it is not many councils that contain a Nelson. His ardour prevailed to overrule the instructions of the Cabinet. He urged that the Russian fleet should be attacked before it could leave the Gulf of Finland, after which the Swedes and Danes might be taken in detail.

On the day following the council, he wrote to Sir Hyde in terms which a subordinate seldom may dare to assume towards his chief:—

> . . . Here you are, with almost the safety, certainly with the honour of England more intrusted to you than ever yet fell to the lot of any British officer. On your decision depends whether our country shall be degraded in the eyes of Europe, or whether she shall rear her head higher than ever. Again do I repeat, never did our country depend so much on the success of any fleet as on this."

Parker was old and slow,[1] but he was no craven. He yielded to the impetuous genius of his vice-admiral, perhaps with tender recollections of the turbot, though he still objected to leaving the Danish fleet in his rear. He stipulated that Copenhagen should be bombarded before an advance was made against the Russians in Revel. Perhaps he was right, but Nelson attached greater importance to time; desiring to destroy the central fleet before it could operate in concert with the fleets of Denmark and Sweden.

On 26th March Parker signalled his fleet to weigh and proceed south through the Great Belt. "Very risky, sir: afraid you will lose a ship or two; these channels are bad to navigate." So counter-orders went out: Captain Otway was sent to bid Nelson take the northerly route by the Sound. "Don't care a damn by which passage we go," quoth the vice-admiral, "so that we fight em'!" Wind was stiffly contrary till the 30th, but the orders held good. On that day the fleet ran the gauntlet of the Sound, heavy batteries on either shore, without losing a spar. Channel only three miles and a half wide, but the Swedish guns remained silent; only the Danish batteries opened fire.

Battle of Copenhagen, 2nd April 1801.

That evening the fleet anchored about five miles below Copenhagen. Parker and Nelson set out to reconnoitre the defences of the capital; found them formidable, especially towards the north. Those on the south were less perfect, but there the navigation was ticklish, for the Danes had lifted all the buoys from those intricate channels. Parker,

[1] He was sixty-two; Nelson was forty-three.

alone, never would have risked it; did not indeed, but, still mollified by the turbot, allowed Nelson to do so with twelve ships of the line and some frigates, while he himself would threaten the town from the north.

During the nights of 30th and 31st the channels were carefully sounded and buoyed afresh. On the morning of the 2nd Nelson advanced to the attack with a favouring southerly breeze. Two of his twelve ships of the line grounded early; a third, the *Agamemnon*, never got into action at all. With the other nine he engaged the great Trekröner fort at the harbour mouth, and the floating defences in that quarter. The Danes were ever splendid fighters; for some hours they held the warships at bay. Hot work, indeed, and no advantage on either side. Parker, beating up from the north, saw two of the southern column aground, and signalled at one o'clock to leave off action. Due report by the signal-lieutenant, of which Nelson, pacing his quarter-deck, took no account. When next he turned—"Shall I repeat it, sir?" asked the lieutenant, which would have passed the order to the other ships in Nelson's column.

"No; acknowledge it," was the reply; then, calling after the officer—"Is No. 16 [for close action] still flying?"

"Yes, sir."

"Mind you keep it so," said Nelson, and resumed his walk, wagging the stump of his lost arm. Stopping again in front of Captain Otway, who had come on board from Parker's flagship, he said:

"D'ye know what's shown on board the commander-in-chief? No. 39!"

"What does that mean, sir?" asked Otway.

"Why, to leave off action," exclaimed Nelson. "Leave off action! now damn me if I do!"

Then turning to Captain Foley, he said:

"You know, Foley, I have only one eye—I have a right to be blind sometimes!" and, putting the glass up to his blind eye, he added, "I really don't see the signal."

Splinters were flying thick; the navigation was very difficult. Admiral Graves repeated the signal, and hauled off with his frigates; but not a line-of-battle ship left her

station. An hour later the Danish fire began to slacken. The slaughter in the enemy's ships and floating batteries had been frightful; their flagship had been burning for more than two hours, and the others had been terribly battered; yet still the survivors fought on; until Nelson, moved by compassion, sent a flag of truce to the Crown Prince, threatening that if the action were continued he would "be obliged to set on fire all the floating batteries he had taken, without having the power of saving the brave Danes who had defended them." A few more communications, and up went the white flag on both sides. Nelson's victory was complete.

Not one of the great battles of the world, this of Copenhagen; yet in political consequences scarcely to be overrated, seeing that it carried the deathblow of the northern confederacy. Merely as a sea-fight, it has been pronounced "the most critical of all in which Nelson was engaged."[1] That is why it has been described in some detail in a narrative too succinct to follow closely the actions of British fleets and armies.

On the day after the action, Nelson went ashore to negotiate for an armistice, which was concluded on 9th April, to last for fourteen weeks. Nelson intended to devote that period to the destruction of the Russian fleet, but the assassination of the Emperor Paul at St. Petersburg on 23rd March altered the whole complexion of affairs. His successor, Alexander I., at once began to reverse the policy of his crazy father, released the British seamen whom Paul had imprisoned, removed the embargo upon British ships, and restored the warehoused goods to their owners. There was an end to the northern confederacy.

Assassination of Paul II., 23rd March 1801.

A convention between Great Britain and the Northern Powers was executed on 17th June, whereby the right of search, which had been the chief source of hostility, was strictly defined and limited, to be exercised in future only by commissioned ships of war, and not by privateers. Englishmen at home, well accustomed to celebrate the victories of their

Convention between Great Britain and the Northern Powers, 17th June 1801.

[1] Mahan's *Life of Nelson*, ii. 98.

seamen, had little occasion for pride in their soldiers at this time. Except in India, and that was far away, the British army had earned the contempt of all nations. That the men were of the same stamp as those of Marlborough at Blenheim, of Clive at Plassey, of Howe at Brandywine, had been proved as often as they were freed from the paralysing incompetence of parade generals—witness such valiant affairs as Lincelles and Villiers-en-Couché; but gross jobbery, family interest, above all the inveterate habit of hard drinking, had made army officers, as a class, a byword for ignorance and uselessness.

Dawn of a better day was at hand. Here and there, among the commissioned ranks, there were heads that had escaped the general fuddling with strong drink—minds that discerned more in the art of war than mere pipeclay and personal courage. One of these was Ralph Abercromby, who went to Ireland in 1798 as Commander of the Forces, and marked his arrival by issuing a general order that upset the equanimity of Viceroy Camden. "The very disgraceful frequency of courts-martial, and the many complaints of irregularities in the conduct of the troops, have too unfortunately proved the army to be in a state of licentiousness which must render it formidable to every one but the enemy." "Injudicious and almost criminal" was Camden's comment to Pitt upon this dish of unminced truth. Here was the honour of every officer impugned; and, as all officers had influential relatives or patrons, influence was brought to bear upon the Horse Guards to such effect that Abercromby was forced to resign the command.

Howbeit, a general whose head was capable of something more than standing the fumes of strong port was an article too rare and valuable to be utterly thrown aside. Like another and younger soldier—one Arthur Wesley, or Wellesley, of whom something was to be heard presently—Abercromby had served with the inglorious Duke of York in Flanders and learnt there "what one ought *not* to do, and that is always something."[1] He was now set to other work. The late administration having decided upon an attempt to

[1] Stanhope's *Conversations with Wellington*, 182.

evict the French from Egypt, Abercromby was directed to embark 14,000 troops at Malta for that purpose, and 5000 Indian troops were despatched under General Baird to co-operate with him by way of the Red Sea. The Turkish Government undertook to supply horses from Constantinople. These arrived, indeed; but of such miserable quality that all except 250 had to be shot or sold for the value of their skins. Abercromby, up to the last moment, had been under orders for service in Italy; he had no information about Egyptian topography, and only one map, "which was in all particulars incorrect."[1]

Expedition to Egypt, Mar.–Aug. 1801.

Here, then, was some material for disaster. Luckily the French commander-in-chief, General Menou, was at loggerheads with his generals and the Beys. He issued soul-stirring proclamations, but lashed the Arabs into such fury by exactions and rough handling that his 22,000 men were spread over the interior to prevent a general rising. He could spare only 2000 troops and 15 guns to oppose the British landing in Aboukir Bay on 8th March. Desultory fighting with detached columns took place daily until the 20th, when Menou, having managed to concentrate sufficient force, found Abercromby well posted on the heights before Alexandria. The French attacked at daybreak on the 21st, but were repulsed after six hours' fighting, with heavy slaughter and the loss of two guns. The British lost 6 officers and 233 men killed, 60 officers and 1190 wounded. Among those wounded was one whom the service could ill spare—its only proved general. Abercromby, struck by a musket-ball in the chest, died from mortification seven days later, leaving an example which three, at least, of his officers were to show themselves capable of following—John Hely Hutchinson,[2] John Moore, and John Hope.[3] The first-named, succeeding his fallen chief in command, followed up the initial success with refreshing vigour. Assigning the investment of Alexandria to General Coote[4] with 6000 troops, Hutchinson let the

Battle of Alexandria, 21st March 1801.

[1] *Annual Register*, p. 307.

[2] Afterwards 2nd Earl of Donoughmore.

[3] Afterwards 4th Earl of Hopetoun.

[4] Sir Eyre Coote (1762–1824), nephew of a better-known namesake, favourably heard of at Plassey, Pondicherry, and elsewhere.

sea into Lake Mareotis as a screen to Coote's landward flank, and marched in pursuit of the enemy in the interior. The Turks, too, perceiving that, spite of information to the contrary, British bayonets were a ponderable asset, put 5000 men in the field, and there followed some hot work during the summer. Belliard surrendered Cairo on 22nd June; Alexandria holding out till 30th August, when 10,500 French soldiers were suffered to march out with the honours of war. Unfruitful honours, indeed; for they were granted only upon condition of the evacuation of Egypt, while five warships and 200 French merchantmen were left in the harbour, and 312 cannon in the arsenal, as spoil for the victors. The fiery Baird, with his Indian contingent, arrived at the seat of war only in time to witness the evacuation.

Foiled in his designs against British commerce through the abortive northern confederacy, and robbed of Egypt, which was to have been his base for the overthrow of British rule in India, Bonaparte opened overtures for peace, preliminaries whereof were settled in October. Great Britain derived little advantage from the treaty—known hereafter as that of Amiens—except relief from the strain of war. She formally recognised the French Government *in esse;* she handed over Egypt to the Turks; she gave up all the colonies won during the war from France and her allies, except Ceylon and Trinidad, and she bound herself to restore Malta to the Knights of St. John within three months. France, on the other hand, only bound herself to withdraw from the kingdom of Naples and the Roman territory; with the implied obligation to respect the independence of the republics she had established in Holland, Switzerland, and Piedmont. Lord Grenville in the House of Lords, Windham in the Commons, bitterly denounced such a peace as humiliating to England; Pitt and Fox both supported Ministers in the debates upon the preliminaries; Sheridan probably was nearest the mark when he described it as a peace at which every man rejoiced, but of which every man was ashamed. But there were others not ashamed to chuckle over a settlement so little to the credit of the Tories. "It is an excellent thing," wrote Fox to Mr. Maitland, "and I do not like it any the

The Peace of Amiens, 27th March 1802.

worse for its being so very triumphant a peace for France, who, except Ancona, does not give up any part of her conquests."[1] Still more frankly did Fox express himself in writing to Mr. Grey:—"I am gone something further in hate to the English Government than perhaps you and the rest of my friends are, and certainly further than can with prudence be avowed. The triumph of the French Government over the English does in fact afford me a degree of pleasure which it is very difficult to disguise."[2] Nevertheless, taken for what it was worth, this peace gave welcome breathing time; and the country expressed its gratitude by supporting Ministers at the general election in the autumn of 1802. Old members of the House of Commons consoled themselves for the loss of him who had led them for seventeen years by enjoying the affability of Addington—so refreshing after the hauteur of inaccessible Pitt; a couple of hundred new members found no fault with the repeal of the income-tax, which, at that time, no Chancellor of the Exchequer had the hardihood to treat except as a war impost, nor with a reduction of ten millions upon the army and navy estimates.

Pitt had undertaken to support his successor on the Treasury Bench; and he did so, at first, as often as required; but he spent most of the session in retirement at Walmer, his official residence as Warden of the Cinque Ports. Yet the House of Commons was not unmindful of him, and testified their unbroken allegiance in a manner for which it would be difficult, if not impossible, to find precedent or parallel. The Speaker having allowed one Mr. Nicholls to move an Address of Thanks to the King "for having been pleased to remove the Right Hon. William Pitt from his councils," declined to rule out of order an amendment by Lord Belgrave "that the Right Hon. William Pitt has rendered great and important servives to his country, and especially deserves the gratitude of this House"; which, on a division, was carried by 222 to 52.

Singular debate upon Pitt's conduct, 7th May 1802.

As the year drew to a close, and the true scope of Bonaparte's designs upon Europe became dimly manifest, the con-

[1] Malmesbury *Correspondence*, iii. 345. [2] Ibid., 349.

viction deepened in the mind of the nation that, in the words of Canning's ditty of the day, Pitt, and Pitt only, was "the pilot to weather the storm." Bonaparte, elected First Consul for life, assumed the mien and tone, as he was shortly to adopt the style and state, of a sovereign autocrat. The opulent terms which he had secured for his country by the treaty of Amiens, and the humiliation thereby inflicted upon Great Britain, had drawn to him the boundless devotion of the French people, and encouraged him to proceed with a project of universal dominion. When Lord Hawkesbury, at the earnest solicitation of the Swiss cantons, addressed to the French Government a remonstrance, pointing out that the occupation of Switzerland by an army under General Ney (October 1802) was inconsistent with the spirit of the aforesaid treaty, Bonaparte replied, in effect, that Great Britain had no business with continental affairs which were not specifically provided for in the articles, and peremptorily called upon the British Government, first, to expel from England the French royalists who had found refuge there since the revolution; and second, to fulfil the tenth article in the treaty, by ceding Malta to the Knights of St. John.

The question of Malta, 1802.

Now it is true that the stipulated time for such cession had long passed; but Bonaparte himself had furnished an excellent reason for delay in executing it, inasmuch as in annexing Parma and Piedmont to France he had not only violated the implied terms of the treaty, but had altered the constitution of the Knights themselves, who had, besides, elected no Grand Master in whose name the cession should be carried out. Scant justice has been done to Addington in this fresh crisis; his administration has been laughed down as a paltry farce; "the Doctor" has been the butt of every historian, and he has been exhibited as climbing into office on the shoulders of the King, and clinging to it long after the country had fain be quit of him. There is more to be said for him than most men have allowed. A man of moderate abilities, certainly, but of singular amiability, an unconvincing spokesman, but of great experience in Parliament, Addington was the friend to whom the King most naturally appealed when Pitt

threw up the leadership. Far from grasping at promotion, Addington consulted Pitt before giving the King an answer. Pitt urgently encouraged him to undertake the task ("I see nothing but ruin, Addington, if you hesitate"), promised him his support, and tried to induce his own colleagues, Grenville, Windham, and the rest, to join his Cabinet. So Addington, honest man, had gone forward, faced by the old Opposition under Fox and Sheridan, who were bent on thwarting all his precautions against Bonaparte, and by the new Opposition under the Grenvilles and Windham, who denounced all attempts to conciliate the French Government. He went well enough, with Pitt at his back, till the war clouds began to roll near. Vast preparations were making in the French, Spanish, and Dutch ports, which could have but one object—the invasion of Great Britain. Pitt, fretting because he distrusted every hand but his own for the helm, slackened in support of the Ministry, grew critical, finally took to attacking it. Addington had tried to induce Grey to join the Cabinet in 1802. Grey refused, failing an assurance of parliamentary reform. In March 1803, Addington proposed to Pitt that they should both serve under Chatham, Pitt's elder brother, as First Minister. The invitation was set haughtily aside—"Really I had not the curiosity to ask what I was to be." Next Addington offered to resign in Pitt's favour, and to serve under him as Secretary of State. This also was declined, unless places were provided for Grenville, Spencer, Dundas, and Windham; which meant that Addington's own friends were to leave office. Nay, Addington himself was to quit office, receiving a peerage and the Speakership of the House of Lords, created *ad hoc*.

Addington meekly laid Pitt's demands before the Cabinet; which, being composed of human beings, declined to consider them, and applied themselves to prepare for a new war. Those who can spare no word of praise to the "King's Friends" for the successful operations in the Baltic and Egypt, because "it was under Pitt that the entire enterprise was resolved on and equipped, its commander chosen, and its operations

The Government prepares for war, 1803.

planned,"[1] might in fairness acknowledge these despised statesmen as authors of adequate measures against invasion. They were on their guard before the close of 1802.

The Cape Colony was to be handed over to the Dutch on 1st January 1803, in accordance with the terms of peace. On 31st December half the British garrison had embarked; the remainder were on the shore ready to go on board the transports in the morning—only fifty men remaining in Cape Town; while a Dutch force of 1500 lay a few miles off, ready to march in. That evening the *Imogene* corvette arrived with orders from England forbidding the evacuation. Never was a command obeyed with greater alacrity. General Dundas and Admiral Sir R. Curtis, having issued secret orders for the troops to disembark, waited upon the Dutch commissary and governor, and kept them palavering half the morning. By the time they had failed to come to agreement, a thousand British soldiers were back in the town, and the question was decided for the nonce.[2] But in accordance with the treaty of Amiens, the cession was carried out later in the year; which rendered necessary the reconquest of the colony in 1804 by Sir David Baird.

On 10th March 1803, a Royal Message announced to Parliament the embodiment of the Militia. Both Houses voted addresses in reply unanimously, and Consols fell from 71⅝ to 61¼. On 16th May the King informed Parliament that he had recalled his Minister, Lord Whitworth, from Paris, and war was formally declared against the French Republic on the 18th; Consols responding by a further drop to 57⅛. Thus far, Pitt had continued to support Addington, and in the debate on the address he spoke for two hours and a half in defence of the war—finest speech he ever made, said both admirers and opponents,[3] but not reported, owing to accidental exclusion of pressmen from the Gallery. What

War declared with France, 18th May 1803.

[1] Stanhope's *Life of Pitt*, iii. 338.

[2] Letter from Colonel Lionel Moore, an eye-witness, to Lord Buckingham, dated 1st January 1802, obviously a mistake for 1803. (Buckingham's *Court of George III.*, vol. iii. p. 187.)

[3] *Life of Sir Samuel Romilly*, ii. 106; *Memoirs of Fox*, iii. 223.

did come to be commonly reported and commented on, was his ominous silence about Ministers. There was a rift, in short, which officious friends soon inflamed into a rupture.[1] Addington's followers encouraged him to show that he was clear of the leading-strings; which he did by appointing Tierney Treasurer of the Navy. Direct flout, this, to his old Mentor; for Tierney had been Pitt's most persistent opponent, and when Pitt charged him with obstruction, fought a duel with him on Putney Heath in 1798.

Estrangement of Pitt and Addington, June 1803.

Pitt was not slow to take up the gauntlet flung by Addington. On 3rd June, when Colonel Patten moved a vote of censure on the Government, Pitt declared he could not defend Ministers, and moved that the House should pass to the orders of the day; an amendment which even Canning, relentless persecutor of Addington, strongly condemned, voting for the first and last time in

[1] Canning lampooned Addington without ruth. The stinging satires which appeared constantly in the *Oracle* did much to estrange "the Dòctor" from his ancient leader, whose restoration to office was Canning's constant aim. Addington was blessed with an even temper, yet it must have been sorely ruffled under the ceaseless lash. Let us quoté a single specimen :—

"'Twere best, no doubt, the truth to tell,
But still, good soul, *he means so well!*
Others, with necromantic skill,
May bend men's passions to their will,
Raise with dark spells the tardy loan,
To shake the vaunting Consul's throne:
In thee, no magic arts surprise,
No tricks to cheat our wondering eyes;
On thee shall no suspicion fall
Of sleight of hand, or cup and ball:
E'en foes must own thy spotless fame,
Unbranded with *a conjuror's name!*
Ne'er shall thy virtuous thoughts conspire
To wrap majestic Thames in fire!
Hail, then, on whom our State is leaning!
O Minister of mildest meaning!
Blest with such virtues to talk big on—
With such a head (to hang a wig on);
Head of wisdom, soul of candour,
Happy Britain's guardian gander,
To rescue from the 'invading Gaul'
Her 'commerce, credit, capital!'
While Rome's great goose could save alone
One Capitol—of senseless stone."

his life against Pitt, who was left in a minority of 56 against 333.

Tactically, Pitt made a sad mistake, excuse for which must be sought in his shattered health, which, never robust, had been buttressed for the incessant labour of many years by too liberal libations of port. His private affairs, also, totally neglected during his long term of office, had fallen to irretrievable ruin. Only the sale of his beloved estate of Holwood, and a generous loan from a few friends, saved him from bankruptcy.[1]

"I really think Pitt is done," wrote a political opponent on 21st May; "his face is no longer red, but yellow; his looks are dejected; his countenance I think much changed and fallen, and every now and then he gives a hollow cough. Upon my soul, hating him as I do, I am almost moved to pity to see his fallen greatness. I saw this once splendid fellow drive yesterday to the House of Lords in his forlorn, shattered equipage, and I stood near him behind the throne till two o'clock this morning. I saw no expression but melancholy on the fellow's face—princes of the Blood passing him without speaking to him, and, as I could fancy, an universal sentiment in those around him that he *was done*." [2]

Both the Grenvilles,[3] Fox,[4] and Grey[5] have left on record that Pitt's conduct at this time did much to strengthen "the Doctor." In fact, the House of Commons, with all its faults, has always reflected the British love of fair play. Strange, and even extravagant, as it may seem to say, the very furniture of the chamber, different in arrangement from that of any other legislature in the world, is a guarantee of party fidelity. Benches ranged sharply face to face—Government and Opposition—offer none of that facility for the formation of groups and shifting of allegiance favoured by the semicircular arrangement of seats universal in continental legislatures. Hence, although a member attacking his own leaders may be sure of rapturous applause at the moment, sooner or later he will

[1] Pitt positively declined £100,000 offered as a gift by the merchants of London, and £30,000 which the kind old King pressed him to accept from the Privy Purse.

[2] *Creevey Papers*, i. 15.

[3] *Buckingham's George III.*, iii. 304.

[4] *Memoirs of Fox*, iii. 223.

[5] Ibid., 411.

be condemned by all parties as one who stabs his comrade in the back.

During the summer of 1803, Pitt found a field of activity outside the House of Commons. His wardenship of the Cinque Ports had suddenly become an actuality, instead of a well-paid sinecure. A French army of invasion, 100,000 strong, lay at Boulogne, and flat-bottomed boats were being knocked together with all speed to ferry them over the Channel. Fifty thousand supports lay along the coast from Brest to Dunkerque, and a descent upon Ireland was known to have been planned.

Imminence of invasion, 1803.

There was more. The British Government had informed the Dutch Republic that her neutrality would be respected, provided that French troops were withdrawn from Holland. Willing as the Dutch may have been to be quit of their unwelcome visitors, they had no means of attaining that end; wherefore on 17th June war was declared between Great Britain and Holland. The Electorate of Hanover, a hereditary dominion of George III., had made a declaration of neutrality, whereupon the First Consul promptly occupied it with 25,000 men under General Mortier. He had cause in later years to repent of this violence, when the King's German Legion had taken rank with the very flower of Wellington's forces in the Peninsula and the Low Countries.

How did our people carry themselves in presence of this tremendous menace? According to the chief French authority on this period, the vastness of the preparations shattered "the illusions of their presumptuous security," and "a shudder of panic ran through all classes of the nation."[1] Strange that no trace of this *frisson de terreur* can be found in any newspapers of the day.[2] It is true that Consols touched 50¼ in July, but let

Attitude of the British nation.

[1] Thiers' *Histoire du Consulat et de l'Empire*, iv. 504.

[2] Not only were the leading articles in the *Times* calmly defiant in tone, but the general intelligence betokened a sense of indifference to danger. Here is an extract taken almost at random from that journal in 1804:—

"MARGATE, *August* 30.

"This fashionable watering-place has not been so full of visitors for 8 years past, as it is this season. Every *hoy*, or, according to the modern term, every *packet* is literally *loaded*. The smallest of these vessels brought down 120 persons yesterday morning, after a long and tedious voyage, when, owing to

facts testify to the tone and temper of the nation. On 18th July a bill was introduced to enable the King to exercise the ancient prerogative of the Crown in requiring the military service of his subjects, and providing for the enrolment of all men between the ages of 17 and 55; the period of service to terminate with the expected invasion. This measure for a *levy en masse* passed through both Houses without a single division; but it never was put into force, so great was the voluntary ardour of all classes. Peers and peasants, lawyers and artisans, merchants, and even the clergy[1] pressed into the ranks, and before the end of the year nearly 400,000 volunteers were under arms for home defence. They were not exempt, any more than the more permanent force which sprang into existence half a century later were exempt, from sarcasm and ridicule. Not the

a very thick fog, she spent three or four hours in getting in; and, to add to her distress, was, for some time, aground. Though the town is so remarkably full, there are not here, at present, many persons of high rank and fashion.

"There was a public breakfast at *Dandelion* yesterday, which was pretty numerously attended; there might be about thirty equipages in waiting. The entertainments were, after the usual mode, pleasant enough; but few persons stood up to the dance. The fineness of the weather occasions excursions every day, both by land and sea.

"Yesterday at twelve o'clock, and for several hours after, a loud and incessant firing was heard at Dover, Deal, and Sandwich, from off Boulogne. What occasioned it is not, as yet, distinctly known here; but from the state of the weather, and of the enemy's preparations, it appears to be the universal belief along the Kentish coast, that the threats of the French Government will soon be attempted to be carried into execution. People are at a loss to conceive what further *preparations* he can want, knowing, as they actually do, the present state of his armaments. Well, let him come; for surely never were men *less* disposed to shrink from peril, or more eagerly desirous to put their foe to the test, than the sailors and soldiers who are on and off this coast. It ought to be mentioned, in justice to them, that the Volunteers are not a whit behind the Regular Troops in their zeal to repel the threatened aggression. There will, there *must*, be a striking difference in such an event, between the fortunes of Cæsar and Napoleon.

"There was a Masquerade here the other evening at Bettison's which was attended respectably enough in point of *numbers*, but had to lament a deficiency in *characters*.

"The Billiard-room at Kidman's was in great disturbance last night, upon some knotty points, between two famous players at this admired game.

"Mrs. Jordan has not yet completed her nights of performance here. She is advertised for to-morrow; and in the play-bills it is announced, that this is to be her last Margate engagement."

[1] See *Times*, Sept. 29, 1803, for a letter to his clergy from the Bishop of St. Asaph, exhorting them to offer themselves for military service.

least part of the hardihood required of citizen soldiers is that which sustains them under professional disdain and popular derision. The citizen army of 1803 had to bear worse than that: they underwent the bitter disparagement and outspoken contempt of the double-headed Opposition in Parliament. But the people were too much in earnest to wince at Windham's sallies and Fox's sneers. "Britons, strike home!" ran the refrain of the most popular song of the day. Walter Scott, too lame to serve on foot, wrote the *Lay of the Last Minstrel*[1] "for the purpose of buying a new horse for the Volunteer cavalry";[2] and the *Times* continued to discuss the chances of attack and defence as calmly as it might have done those of Government and Opposition in a general election.

The general condition of Ireland justified the Government in extending the act for the *levy en masse* to that country; but there, as in other parts of the United Kingdom, it was anticipated by the eagerness of the yeomen to enrol.[3] One result of the general election of 1802 had been to prove that the agitation against the Union had ceased to have any practical existence; much satisfaction had been given to the people by the rebuilding, at the expense of the Government, of Catholic chapels wrecked during the rebellion; the Viceroy and the Chancellor, despite the ultra-Protestant principles upon which they began their administration, had secured the confidence of all classes by their temperate and tolerant rule.[4]

General quiet in Ireland.

Nevertheless, there were men in Ireland, as hitherto there always have been, who perceived in England's danger Ireland's opportunity. Robert Emmett, a hare-brained young fellow of respectable birth, a Protestant too, having

[1] Published in 1805.

[2] Lockhart's *Scott*, iii. 28.

[3] Grattan's *Life*, v. 242; Alex. Knox's *Remains*, iv. 135.

[4] Grattan wrote to Fox that permanent loyalty was not to be expected without a settlement of the Catholic claims, but he added: "Without any alteration in the legal condition of this country, and merely by a temperate exercise of the existing laws, the present chief governor of Ireland has more advanced the strength of Government and its credit, than could have been well conceived. . . . I incline to think that if Lord Hardwicke had been Viceroy and Lord Redesdale Chancellor in '98, the former rebellion would have never existed." (Grattan's *Life*, v. 242.)

broken off a promising career at Trinity College in order to join the United Irishmen in 1798, betook himself to France after the rebellion, where he had personal interviews with Bonaparte and Talleyrand, and returned to Ireland at the end of 1802 to promote a rising, intended to be simultaneous with the landing of French troops. The invasion hung fire: the rising took place prematurely. Having spent his whole fortune of £3000 in buying green uniforms and muskets, Emmett arranged a plan for the capture of the Castle, the Pigeon House, and the Artillery Barracks, and for the seizure of the Viceroy. Depots had been secured in various parts of the town, and a number of reckless fellows enrolled; but an explosion in a secret powder manufactory in Patrick Street precipitated matters, and on the evening of 23rd July the bands were assembled for an assault upon the Castle. Informers, as usual in Irish conspiracies, gave warning to the authorities; but there was a strange negligence in taking precautions against surprise. However, the Chief-Justice, Lord Kilwarden, was summoned from his country-house some five miles from Dublin. Emmett could not keep his men in hand; they separated into independent bands, committing a few murders upon those who refused to join them. One of these bands met the Chief-Justice's carriage in Thomas Street; his daughter, Miss Wolfe, and his nephew, a clergyman, were with him. The ruffians stopped the carriage; the aged judge and his nephew were haled out, and butchered with pikes before the eyes of Miss Wolfe, who was allowed to make her escape. In another part of the town Colonel Browne was killed by the discharge of a blunderbuss; but by that time the troops were under arms; the insurgent leaders were at violent issue among themselves; and, although they managed to lead a mob against the Castle, a few rounds of musketry served to disperse them, and the affair was over. Over: except that which the disaffected party in Ireland still choose to celebrate as a martyrdom. Emmett and nineteen of his fellow-conspirators were brought to trial; one was acquitted; one was pardoned; the others paid the penalty of death.

Emmett's rising, 23rd July 1803.

CHAPTER III

Pitt declines to join the Opposition—Resignation of Addington—Pitt's last administration—Pitt as Warden of the Cinque Ports—Napoleon alters his plan of invasion—Graham Moore and the Spanish treasure-ships—Proceedings against Lord Melville—His impeachment—Villeneuve gives Nelson the slip—Nelson pursues to the West Indies—Sir Robert Calder's bungle—Napoleon abandons the invasion of England—Nelson hoists his flag on the *Victory*—Battle of Trafalgar—Death of Nelson—Pitt's last public utterance—Napoleon's letter to George III.—The third European coalition—Napoleon marches against the Austrians—Battle of Austerlitz—British expedition to Hanover—Death of Pitt—Rearrangement of parties—Resignation of the Government—"All the Talents" Ministry—Negotiations for peace with France—Death of Fox—Battle of Maida—Battles of Jena and Auerstädt.

GRANTED all that may be said in defence of Addington—granted that, with Pitt at his elbow, he had planned the mine and laid the train—a point had been reached in the winter of 1803–4 when all but his immediate following saw need for a steadier hand than his to carry the port-fire. Then was fulfilled Canning's prophecy, penned during the brief interval of peace:

> "And O! if again the rude whirlwind should rise,
> The dawning of peace should fresh darkness deform,
> The regrets of the good and the fears of the wise
> Shall turn to the pilot that weathered the storm."

If Addington, sorely buffeted by both wings of Opposition remained under any illusion as to the real views of Pitt and Grenville regarding himself, it must have been rudely dispelled by a letter written in July 1803 by Grenville to Lord Wellesley, Governor-General of India; which letter, taken in an East Indiaman captured by the French, made fine reading in the *Moniteur* of 4th September—still finer when it appeared in English journals on Addington's breakfast-table.

". . . It gives me great pleasure," ran one paragraph, "to see that while my difference with Addington becomes every day

more marked, all the motives which made Pitt and me differ in opinion and conduct daily decrease. Our situation, indeed, in one essential point of view, is entirely different. Though he did not recommend Addington to his present employment (and, indeed, who is there that knows him would have done it?), he nevertheless gave him a certain portion of influence, more active than my opinion would have permitted me to grant, in the formation of the new administration. He advised their measures a long time after I had ceased to have any intercourse with them."[1]

We cannot mend this paltry Ministry, was Grenville's advice to Pitt; let us end it by joining our forces with Fox. Fox had supported Addington's pacific policy, but now the country was at war, he was all for "getting rid of the rascals."[2] "Let us first get rid of the Doctor is my first principle of action," he explained to Grey.[3] Pitt declined such a coalition. He would remain an independent supporter of the Government, free to oppose such measures as he deemed unsound in the emergency. Impossible, on the face of it, such an arrangement; but it saved Pitt's conscience. Addington had taken office on the faith of his support: he should have it, so far as that was consistent with the national safety.

Pitt declines to join the Opposition, Jan. 1804.

Such an allegiance was too hollow to endure; but Addington died hard. He was the King's friend; the Court party was strong in both Houses, and party discipline in an unreformed Parliament was enforced under weighty penalties. To vote against the Government might mean forfeiture of pension or lucrative sinecure; the member for a close borough was bound in honour to vote as directed by his patron; officers of the army and navy going into the Opposition lobby were deprived of their commands and lost all hope of promotion. In spite of all this, Addington's majority ebbed away when Pitt, supported by Fox and Grenville, denounced his military measures as dangerously

[1] *Annual Register*, 1804, p. 153. Lord Stanhope, reading aloud this intercepted letter from the newspaper to Pitt at Walmer, came to a passage where Grenville complained that Pitt had "contracted the bad habit of never writing to any one"; upon which Pitt drily observed: "I think Grenville will now acknowledge that I was in the right of it."

[2] Fox to Grey, 2nd April 1804 (*Memoirs of Fox*, iii. 459).

[3] Ibid., 463, 12th April.

inadequate. It sank as low as 21, rose again to 52, and then fell to 37.

For some weeks the King had been violently insane; permanently so, as was feared; but towards the end of April he had recovered so as to be fit for moderate attention to business. Addington took the opportunity of tendering his resignation, which nearly upset his Majesty's intellect once more. George III. loved the Minister—courtly, amiable, comfortably mediocre—such an agreeable relief from the dictatorial austerity of Pitt, with whom he had held no intercourse whatever for three years. But Lord Chancellor Eldon had remained high in the King's confidence, and assured him that nobody was possible but Pitt. "Heigho! Pitt be it, then, but don't let me see him yet." So Pitt drew up a plan for a new Ministry,[1] which Eldon brought to the King. It reflected Pitt's sense of the supreme peril in which the nation stood. Ancient feuds were to be hushed; party lines obliterated; Fox was to be Secretary of State, Grenville Lord President and leader in the Lords—a grand scheme, enabling England to await invasion with unbroken front. But the King marred it, as he had marred the Irish Union. Grenville he would accept, for Grenville was a Tory after all; to Grey and Lord Fitzwilliam, Whigs, he consented, though with a grimace; but Fox—no! not at any price—not yet, at least.

*Resignation of Addington, 26th April 1804.

Fox himself played a fine part. He said he wished it to be on record that he would stand in the way of no arrangement; that the Grenvilles must not let his exclusion prevent them taking office, and that he would use all his influence to persuade his friends to join the new Ministry.[2] "I am too old myself to care now about office [he was only fifty-five], but I have many friends who for years have followed me. I shall advise them to join the Government, and I trust Pitt can give them places." Nothing could be nobler: yet the scheme broke down. Lord Grenville declined to join any government from which Fox was shut out; Windham and Lord Spencer stood aloof with Grenville,

[1] The draft is given in facsimile as frontispiece to vol. iv. of Stanhope's *Pitt*.

[2] Stanhope's *Pitt*, iv. 172.

whom they owned as leader. Fox's friends refused to serve except under their own chief; possibly with an eye to Carlton House, for there had been near prospect, lately, of a Regency, and the only possible Regent was the Prince of Wales, who plumed himself as leader of the Whig Opposition. Later years were to show that he only loved the Whigs because his father hated them; meanwhile he was buying up boroughs, commanding his nominees in Parliament, and using every means offered by the corrupt custom of the times to thwart, and if possible to overthrow, any Ministry which had the King's confidence.[1]

Pitt's last Administration, 1804–6.

Thus was Pitt's project of a Cabinet of the best men of all parties brought to nought by the King's narrower view of the situation, and the occasion of setting a grand precedent was lost. Lord Macaulay, admitting Pitt's perfect sincerity in the attempt, has blamed him for not insisting upon the admission of Fox. "The royal obstinacy would have given way, as it gave way a few months later when opposed to the immutable resolution of Lord Grenville."[2] More likely that the royal intellect would have given way, entailing a Regency, with consequences that Pitt perceived reason to dread. "I will teach that proud man [Grenville]," he said to Eldon, "that I can do without him, though it may cost me my life," and applied himself to build a Cabinet out of the limited materials left. Of its twelve members, all were peers except Pitt and Castlereagh, an arrangement curiously in contrast with present-day practice. It was an administration, said the wits, composed of William and Pitt. Canning told Lord Malmesbury that he had "protested against" being taken into the Cabinet, "because the public would evidently look upon me as not yet ripe for it." He was four-and-thirty, had been ten years in Parliament, five of which he had spent in office under Pitt, had not hitherto been

[1] "At that period [1804] we had a kind of Cabinet with whom I used to consult. They were the Dukes of York, Portland, Devonshire, and Northumberland, Lord Guilford (that was Lord North), Lords Stormont, Moira, and Fitzwilliam, and Charles Fox." (Statement by George IV. to J. W. Croker: *The Croker Papers*, i. 239.) See also the *Creevey Papers*, i. 62, *et passim*.

[2] *Biographies*, p. 223 (edit. 1860).

suspected of diffidence, but now undertook the subordinate duties of Treasurer of the Navy.

Pitt made it the business of the session to repair the defects he had denounced in Addington's scheme of national defence, and had to face the combined opposition of Addington, Windham, and Fox. When Parliament rose on 31st July, long after the usual date of prorogation, the Prime Minister repaired to his post as diligent and vigilant Warden of the Cinque Ports. Although Bonaparte's army of invasion still lay at Boulogne, people in England had begun to regard the danger with the contempt bred of familiarity. Not so Pitt, who spent his days exercising his volunteer battalions, riding round a chain of martello towers then in course of erection along the south coast, inspecting the great defensive canal which he had caused to be dug for six-and-thirty miles through the marshes from Hythe. Lord Grenville, glowering through the coloured glasses of party, thinks all this to be useless fuss. "Can anything," he wrote to Lord Buckingham, "equal the ridicule of Pitt riding about from Downing Street to Wimbledon, and from Wimbledon to Cox Heath, to inspect military carriages, impregnable batteries, and Lord Chatham's reviews? Can he possibly be serious in expecting Bonaparte now?" Even Sir John Moore, commanding the Dover district, sneered at the Minister's preparations. "We understand," he wrote to Creevey on 28th August, "that Government have positive information that we are to be invaded, and I am told that Pitt believes it. The experience of the last twelve months has taught me to place little confidence in the information or belief of Ministers. . . . I cannot persuade myself that Bonaparte will be mad enough to attempt it." Fox told Grey that it was a groundless alarm, "raised for some political purpose by the Ministers." Cold incredulity is the reward of the statesman who, by timely and ample preparation, adds to the taxpayers' burden. No gratitude need be expected by him who *averts* a danger; only he is hailed as deliverer who allows the storm to burst, and afterwards manages to pull his country out of the wreck.

Pitt as Warden of the Cinque Ports, 1804.

Nothing in history is more certain than that this very month—August 1804—had been fixed by Napoleon for the invasion of England. "This fact," says M. Thiers, "has been doubted sometimes, but can be doubted no longer, by any one who sees, as I have seen, several thousand official letters all combining upon the same point."[1] Does any one still doubt? Let him take note of the minute details of Napoleon's preparation. Order 39 of the French Republic had been drafted, and was to be issued to the "Army of England" so soon as it had crossed the channel.[2] Napoleon, having been declared Emperor by the French Senate on 18th May 1804, postponed his coronation till

[1] *Hist. du Consulat et de l'Empire*, v. 467.

[2] Draft order (dated 10th February 1804), to be issued to the "Army of England" after landing:—

FRENCH REPUBLIC.

Order, No. 39.]

ARMY OF ENGLAND.

LIBERTY. EQUALITY.

Head Quarters of the Centre, at —— ——, the —— of the month of ——, year — of the French Republic.

THE GENERAL OF DIVISION ———, TO HIS COMPANIONS IN ARMS.

"SOLDIERS,

"The sea is passed! The boundaries of nature have yielded to the genius and the fortune of the Hero, the Saviour of France; and haughty England already groans under the yoke of her conquerors!

"London is before you! that Peru of the Old World is your prey. Within twenty days I plant the tricoloured flag on the proud walls of her execrable Tower!—March! The road to victory is open. In order to render that happy victory certain and inevitable, your Commander here offers you some advice, BRAVE CENTRE, at the same time that he renews, upon the enemy's soil, the sacred promises that you have already twice received from the august Head of the State. I know that there are amongst you some who are intriguers and fomenters of disturbance, and I shall know how to punish such. I know, also, the pretexts which malice will employ to seduce you from your duties, and from the path of honour. No, my children! it is not with a view to deprive you of your rewards that we exact of you a temporary and short forbearance, which military prudence and the force of circumstances demand. It is not to defraud you of the gifts awarded to you by BONAPARTE, that we point out to you the only course by which you can attain the enjoyment of them. Once more I pledge the faith of Government, which only reserves to itself among the enormous treasures that you are on the eve of conquering, the arms and fleets of the enemy; while it destines their monuments of the arts to decorate the temples of the Capital of the World, and to become an eternal record of your victories. *Towns, fields, provisions, cattle, gold,* and *silver,*—I abandon *all* to you! Occupy those noble mansions, those smiling farms. The properties, the families of your enemies, are all your own; all is destined for your wealth,

December, so that it might get done in London. He caused the Master of the French Mint to prepare dies for a medal, showing the Emperor's head laurel-crowned on the obverse, and on the reverse Hercules crushing the monster Antæus, with the legend *Descente en Angleterre*, and under it *Frappé à Londres en 1804*. Three exemplars of this medal are in existence—interesting—only they were not struck in London! as they might have been if the British Opposition had prevailed to upset Pitt's plans.

Napoleon arrived at Boulogne on 20th July to assume command of the Army of England. A few hours sufficed to convince him that his flat-bottomed boats were a farce in presence of the English fleet. Next day he wrote to Decrès, his Minister of Marine: "The English do not know what is hanging over their ears. Let us but be masters of the Channel for twelve hours, and England's day will be over —*l'Angleterre a vécu!*" Aye, but how to be masters! The French fleets were not very conveniently situated just then. Ganteaume's eighteen sail of the line were shut up in Brest by Cornwallis; Villeneuve was blockaded in Rochefort. Latouche Tréville, indeed, surely might break out from Toulon when he pleased, for Nelson, who had been watching him there for more than a year, could scarcely keep his ships afloat any longer. Tréville had come out on 14th June with eight sail of the line and six frigates; Nelson, with only five seaworthy ships, drove him back into port. Tréville reported officially that he had pursued the enemy till night;[1] so Napoleon, nothing doubting, ordered him to force the blockade, make a feint in the

Napoleon alters his plan of invasion, July 1804.

or for your enjoyment. An impure race, rejected by Heaven, and which has dared to be the enemy of BONAPARTE, will expiate its crimes by disappearing from the earth. Yes, I swear to you, that you shall soon become terrible!

. . . . . .

"Remain then assured of all these benefits, dutifully obeying the orders of your Commanders; delivering up those who may attempt to foment disturbances amongst you; and observing the strictest discipline and duty in the presence of the enemy.

"—— GENERAL OF DIVISION.
"—— CHEF DE L'ETAT MAJOR."

[1] When Nelson read this, he wrote to his brother: "You have seen Monsieur La Touche's letter, of how he chased me and how I *ran*. I keep it; and by God! if I take him, he shall *eat* it."

direction of Malta and Egypt, pass secretly through the Straits of Gibraltar, sail to the relief, first of Villeneuve at Rochefort, then of Ganteaume at Brest, and bring on the entire combined fleet to Boulogne, in order to cover the transit of the invading force. The design was never attempted, for Tréville died on 20th August, and no other officer in the fleet knew the secret instructions. The invasion of England was deferred to another summer.

Hitherto Spain had taken no part in the war, save by paying a monthly subsidy to the French Republic, which Addington's Ministry had agreed not to treat as a breach of neutrality. Now, however, Napoleon called upon the Spanish Government to fulfil its obligation under the treaty of Ildefonso (1796), and support the war with 25 sail of the line and 24,000 troops. Accordingly, when Pitt received warning that active preparations were going forward at Ferrol, Cadiz, and Carthagena, he was not to be hoodwinked as his father had been in 1761, when the autumn treasure-ships were allowed to pass and Spain straightway threw herself into the cause of France. He despatched a squadron of four frigates under Captain Graham Moore[1] to intercept a like number of Spanish frigates, laden with bullion, on the voyage from South America. Moore fell in with them on 5th October off Cape St. Mary. One of the Spaniards blew up in the first onset; the other three struck their flags. This was denounced in Parliament by the Opposition as an act of piracy, forasmuch as there had been no formal declaration of war and the British minister at Madrid had not demanded his passport. It was explained that Lord Hawkesbury, Addington's Foreign Minister, had warned the Spanish Government in February that any extraordinary naval preparation would be understood as an unfriendly act, and such preparation, it was not denied, had taken place; but Fox described Pitt's statement as "the language of gross fraud," and Grey was not far behind him in violence of expression. In short, the debate was a fair example of the shady side of government by party; showing how far men may be tempted to take sides with the enemies of their

Moore captures the Spanish treasure-ships, 5th Oct. 1804.

[1] Brother of Sir John Moore.

country in their eagerness to discredit political opponents. But it also afforded proof that British legislators will never follow their leaders in an unpatriotic course. Pitt's majorities in the House of Commons had been very unsatisfactory so far—so low as 28 on 15th June 1805; Grey's amendment to the address upon the affair of the Spanish treasure-ships gave the Government their first signal victory, for it was rejected by 313 votes to 106—majority, 207.

Very different was the result to Ministers of the next attack by the Opposition, led by Mr. Whitbread on 8th April 1805. Upon Pitt personally it told with terrible effect. He was a man of few friends. Incessant absorption in public affairs for more than twenty years had left him little leisure to cultivate intimacy outside a very narrow circle. Most men were deterred from making advances to one so impatient of the trivial and the obvious, which make up so much of ordinary conversation. Minds of this habit and stamp are more deeply wounded through their few friends than are others whose affections range over a wider field. It so befel that the wound which Pitt was to receive through Lord Melville, with whom he had maintained a warm friendship since very early in his political life, was to be dealt by the hand of William Wilberforce, whose intimacy with Pitt was closer than a brother's. More than that, the affair involved a second rupture with Addington—Pitt's quasi-foster-brother and playfellow in boyhood—who had become reconciled to his old chief and had re-entered the Cabinet.[1] The trouble arose out of the tenth report of a commission "to inquire into frauds and abuses in the Royal Navy." It was found that Melville, when Treasurer of the Navy so far back as 1783, had allowed gross irregularity in the administration of public money, making advances out of Navy funds to the secret service of the Foreign and Home departments, and allowing the Paymaster to speculate with money from the same account. Melville was now First

Proceedings against Lord Melville, 1805.

[1] A vacancy had been created in December 1804 by Lord Harrowby's retiral in consequence of an accident. Pitt offered his old colleague a peerage and the Presidency of the Council. Addington begged hard to be left in the House of Commons, but yielded in the end, and took his seat as Viscount Sidmouth.

Lord of the Admiralty; the Opposition had been more than human if they held back from attack; indeed, it was their plain duty and function to make it. Even the Cabinet were divided. Castlereagh and Hawkesbury were uneasy; Addington (now Lord Sidmouth) declared he must resign office rather than attempt the defence of his colleague. Pitt would meet the vote of censure with a direct negative, but he was not supported, and agreed reluctantly to the middle course of a select committee upon Melville's case. The manœuvre did not avert defeat. Parliament was still unreformed, but reform was in the air. The French Revolution had quickened the public conscience: there were enough independent members under Wilberforce's lead to turn out any Government that should screen jobbery and corruption.

Everything depended upon the view and course taken by Wilberforce, whose integrity and disinterestedness were far above suspicion. What is still more rare in human affairs, nobody imagined that vanity had the slightest effect upon his actions. All men recognised moral principle as Wilberforce's sole guide in public affairs. He rose late in the debate—the House intensely curious about the line he would take. It was believed that forty votes, counting eighty on a division, depended upon his decision. Glancing, as he rose, at the leader of the House—his friend—"it required no little effort to resist the fascination of that penetrating eye."[1] But he never flinched, and members filed off into the lobbies with his solemn appeal ringing in their ears—"We it is who are now truly on our trial before the moral sense of England: if we shrink from it, deeply shall we hereafter repent our conduct."

At half-past five in the morning the tellers declared the numbers to be equal—216 and 216. Speaker Abbot, visibly agitated, sat for some minutes meditating, then rose and gave the casting vote in favour of Whitbread's motion. The Government stood defeated by one. The remaining resolutions were put and carried without more divisions. The House had delivered its verdict: Lord Melville was found to have been "guilty of a gross violation of the law and a high breach of duty." He resigned office at

[1] Wilberforce's Diary (*Life*, iii. 221).

once, but the Opposition were not content. They had tasted blood, and thirsted for more.[1] Whitbread gave notice of a motion praying for the removal of Lord Melville from the Privy Council. The old King, who had received Pitt back into full confidence by this time, strongly objected to this. "It is unbecoming the character of Englishmen," he said, "who naturally, when a man is fallen, are too noble to pursue their blows." But Melville was beforehand with his enemies. He wrote with much dignity to Pitt, desiring him "to give that advice to his Majesty which tends most to strengthen the Government and secure to it the confidence of the House of Commons," and Melville's name was struck off the list of Privy Councillors.[2]

The Committee of Inquiry reported unfavourably to Lord Melville. On 11th June he was heard at the bar of the House in his own defence. He acknowledged that money to the amount of £20,000, received by him as Treasurer of the Navy, had been applied in the public service to purposes other than naval, but what those purposes were he could not disclose "without a great breach as well of public duty as of private honour." The House refused to accept this explanation, and decreed an impeachment. Sidmouth's followers had voted with Pitt in the tie division of 8th April, but had taken such a strong line in opposition to the Government in the subsequent proceedings that Sidmouth, when called to account for this defection, resigned office, and with him went Lord Buckinghamshire. It was June 1806 before Melville was impeached before his peers, acquitted of malversation, but found guilty of negligent administration. By that time Pitt had quitted for ever the scene of his labours and triumphs. His health, far ruined already,

Impeachment of Lord Melville, June 1806.

[1] I am far from impugning the motives of the Opposition leaders in this affair; they were performing a public service. The glee of the rank and file of the party was less edifying. "We have had indeed most famous sport with this same Leviathan, Lord Melville. His tumbling so soon was as unexpected by all of us as it was by himself. . . . This must place Pitt in the cursedest dilemma. . . . You can form no notion of his fallen crest in the House of Commons—of his dolorous distracted air. He betrayed Melville only to save himself. . . . His own ruin must come next, and that, I think, at no great distance." (*Creevey Papers*, i. 34.)

[2] It was restored in 1807, but Melville never held office again, and died in 1811.

never recovered the strain of this painful affair; yet, in the few months that remained to him, it was his destiny to undergo the extremes of success and discomfiture.

First as to the success: it came from the blue water, source of most good news for Englishmen. Admiral Villeneuve had succeeded to the dead Tréville in command of the French fleet which Nelson had mewed up so many months in Toulon.

Napoleon had given him instructions to make his escape and sail for the West Indies, threatening the British colonies. Should Nelson be tempted, with his crazy ships, to follow across the Atlantic, Villeneuve was to return at once to Europe, release the Spanish fleet blockaded in Ferrol, and the French fleet in Brest; then, taking supreme command of the mighty armada of fifty or sixty sail of the line, hold the Channel while the long-planned invasion was effected.

At first everything went according to the Emperor's grand design. Villeneuve, with eleven sail of the line, gave Nelson the slip on 30th March. Picking up the Spanish Admiral Gravina off Cadiz with six or eight ships, he made sail for the West Indies, reaching Martinique on 14th May, where he was joined by Admiral Missiessy, who had escaped from Rochefort. Villeneuve had now twenty sail of the line, and a long start of Nelson to boot.

Villeneuve gives Nelson the slip, Mar. 1805.

Nelson, having swept the Mediterranean for a fortnight in vain search of the enemy, spoke a vessel on 18th April which had seen Villeneuve's fleet 300 miles to the west ten days before. "If this account is true," he wrote to Sir Gilbert Elliot, "much mischief may be apprehended. It kills me, the very thought." Leaving a squadron of five frigates to intercept a French descent upon Egypt, which he apprehended, he set sail in pursuit, but, baffled by foul winds, it was not till 11th May that he picked up certain intelligence in Lagos Bay, and steered for the West Indies. "It will not be supposed," he wrote to the Admiralty, "that I am on a party of pleasure, running after eighteen sail of the line with ten . . . but salt beef and the French fleet is far preferable to roast beef and champagne." Reaching Bar-

Nelson pursues to the West Indies, May 1805.

bados on 4th June, he was misled by false information and weighed for Trinidad. There he discovered his mistake, instantly steered north again, and learnt at Antigua on the 12th that the French fleet had sailed back to Europe. Easy to miss them in the vast Atlantic expanse, so he despatched a couple of fast frigates to warn the Admiralty to look out for Villeneuve. The Admiralty did their best, but they had not another Nelson on hand. They sent out Sir Robert Calder with fifteen sail of the line, who fell in with Villeneuve off Cape Finisterre on 22nd July, having twenty sail of the line. Two of the Spaniards struck to Calder, reducing the odds to eighteen to fifteen, but the English admiral was not the man for the occasion. Next morning, instead of engaging the enemy, he sailed away, allowing Villeneuve to resume his voyage to Ferrol, where he was reinforced by nine Spanish sail of the line.[1] Villeneuve then received stringent orders from his Emperor to sail at once for Brest, attack Cornwallis's blockading fleet, and take up a position in the Channel in conjunction with Admiral Ganteaume.

Sir Robert Calder's bungle, 22nd July 1805.

It was a great opportunity. Hold the Channel for twelve hours—*l'Angleterre a vécu!* but the very name of Nelson saved his country in the supreme moment of her peril. Villeneuve, believing that he would meet Nelson off Brest, had no stomach for such an encounter. Flatly disobeying his orders, he sailed south to Cadiz, instead of north to Brest.

Napoleon spent these precious days at Boulogne, hour after hour sweeping the horizon in vain search for his fleet. When news came of Villeneuve's disobedience, his anger was as violent as it was vain.[2] For more than two years his whole resources had been bent to one purpose; all Europe would be laughing on the morrow at its miscarriage: he would give Europe something serious to think about. In the whole of Napoleon's titanic career, nothing stirs admiration so powerfully as the swift precision with which he swung round with all his mighty armament upon a fresh prey,

Napoleon abandons the invasion of England.

[1] Calder was tried by court-martial, and censured for error of judgment.

[2] *Histoire du Consulat et de l'Empire*, v. 464.

and, passing through cowering Prussia and the German principalities, swooped upon Austrian Mack's rear at Ulm.

Villeneuve's fright turned out to be causeless. Nelson was nowhere near Brest. On 16th July he touched at Gibraltar, went ashore for the first time in more than two years,[1] and finding he had missed the Frenchman, sailed for England. He had earned repose; but a couple of weeks at Merton convinced him that there was no repose for him so long as the French were on the sea. He offered his services against the allied fleet at Cadiz; they were gladly accepted; on 14th September he hoisted his flag on the *Victory* at Portsmouth, and before the end of the month was off Cadiz with thirty-four sail of the line. Seven or eight of these ships Nelson sent away, hoping to tempt Villeneuve out by offering battle with an inferior force. Villeneuve dared not decline the challenge, for his master cursed him as a feeble coward, and ordered him to put to sea. On 21st October at daybreak the combined French and Spanish fleets were sighted off Cape Trafalgar.

Nelson hoists his flag on the *Victory*, 14th Sept. 1805.

The wind was very light from W.N.W. The British fleet came before it in two columns—Nelson leading the northern, Collingwood the southern—twenty-seven sail of the line. Villeneuve, with thirty-three sail of the line, made his fleet wear together, which brought it on a northerly course, thereby getting nearer his harbour of refuge and leading among the treacherous shoals off Trafalgar. The breeze was so feeble and fitful as sorely tried the British admiral's patience, and it seriously deranged the order of battle in both fleets. "I will now amuse the fleet with a signal," said Nelson to Captain Blackwood. Then went up the immortal sentence, perhaps the most famous of any in our history, which shall stir British hearts to the nation's latest hour:

Battle of Trafalgar, 21st Oct. 1805.

"ENGLAND EXPECTS THAT EVERY MAN WILL DO HIS DUTY."

"I wish to God Nelson would stop signalling!" exclaimed the choleric Collingwood, two miles to the south of the

[1] Nelson's *Despatches*, vi. 475.

flagship, and on the point of engaging with a Spanish three-decker; "we all know well enough what we've got to do."

Cheers rang from ship to ship as the signal was read out, and immediately the first gun was fired from the French *Fougueux*. Nelson then made his favourite signal—"Close action"; and for the next hour the *Victory*, leading the port column, received the concentrated fire of seven or eight of the enemy.

The *Victory* was almost a wreck, and had lost fifty men, before she fired a shot. "Too warm work, Hardy, to last long," said Nelson to his flag captain. Still his ship forged ahead, and at last opened fire as she was rounding within thirty feet of the stern of Villeneuve's flag-ship, the *Bucentaure*. The effect was terrific; about 400 French seamen fell under that single broadside, and twenty guns were dismounted. Next the *Victory*, putting up her helm, ran upon the port side of the *Redoubtable*, whose tops were full of sharp-shooters. Nelson and Hardy were pacing the deck together, when the admiral fell, struck by a musket-ball from the tops.

"They have done for me at last," he said; "my backbone is shot through."

They carried him below, and throughout the next hour, while the issue of the combat was uncertain, the dying hero asked incessantly for news of its progress. About four o'clock Captain Hardy returned to the cockpit to congratulate Nelson upon his victory. Fourteen or fifteen of the enemy's ships had struck. "That is well," remarked Nelson, "but I bargained for twenty."

After that he repeated at intervals: "Thank God! I have done my duty," and at 4.30 P.M. drew his last breath. Eighteen of the enemy's ships had struck; of the rest, one burnt to the water edge and blew up, four escaped to sea, and eleven others, shattered remnant of the morning's proud array, took refuge in Cadiz under Admiral Gravina, Villeneuve having struck his flag. Death of Nelson.

"England has saved herself by her courage; she will save Europe by her example." These words, spoken at the Lord Mayor's banquet on 9th November 1805, were the last

that Pitt ever uttered in public. The news of Trafalgar had taken more than a fortnight to reach London: even the splendour and completeness of the victory could not atone for the loss of Britain's greatest admiral. The same spasm of triumph and woe ran through London and the country as when, on 17th October 1759, it was told that Canada was won, and that Wolfe, winning it, was lost. But for every individual who knew Wolfe, a thousand knew and gloried in Nelson.

Pitt's last public utterance, 9th Nov. 1805.

Pitt drew fresh courage from the destruction of the French and Spanish sea-power, and needed it all, for the coalition of Powers—his third and last coalition—had hung fire for many a month, playing hide-and-seek in Addington's pigeon-holes and despatch-boxes, or douched with cold water in the bureaux of Vienna and Berlin. In Alexander of Russia lay Pitt's only hope, for indeed the coalition project had been revived by him first among the Powers. The earliest mention of it appears in the Russian chancellor's despatch to Count Simon Woronzow in London (Nov. 20, 1803), where it is proposed that Russia and Great Britain should come to an understanding in regard to France's evident intention to break up Turkey and seize Egypt as a base of operations against British India.[1] Pitt's return to office in May 1804 braced matters up. The coalition became the object of his chief concern. No less was it Napoleon's concern to thwart the project. He took action of a kind most likely to do so. On 2nd January 1805 he addressed a letter to George III.—"Sir and brother"—eloquently setting forth the folly of war between two such nations as France and Great Britain, and earnestly advocating a lasting peace. "I consider it no disgrace to make the first step. I have, I hope, sufficiently proved to the world that I fear none of the chances of war. . . . Peace is the wish of my heart, but war has never been inconsistent with my glory." And so forth. Nothing could have been devised more ingeniously to strengthen the peace party in England, and to show the

The third European coalition, 11th April 1805.

[1] F.O. Russia, vol. 54. The despatch is printed in Dr. Holland Rose's *Napoleonic Studies*, 1904.

Cabinet of George III. in a sinister light, should they decline the overture.

Unreasonable—flagrantly inhuman as it would have been to reject such an overture without solid cause—not even Charles Fox himself, with all his passionate craving for peace, would have deigned to negotiate under threat of invasion; and no man in Europe was less likely than Pitt to throw over an ally. Lord Mulgrave replied on 14th January that "his Majesty feels it impossible for him to answer more particularly to the overture that has been made to him, till he has had time to communicate with the Powers on the Continent with whom he is engaged in confidential connexions and relations, and particularly the Emperor of Russia."[1]

It must not be supposed that Bonaparte's proposals were brushed aside without anxious consideration by the Cabinet. Lord Mulgrave sent a copy of the letter to Lord G. L. Gower at St. Petersburg, with a despatch entering fully into the merits of the scheme, explaining the conditions upon which the British Government could entertain it, and suggesting that if the Emperor of Russia agreed that an understanding could be come to, "no time should be lost in making these overtures," and that "the ordinary form and usual course of negotiations might be laid aside with advantage."[2] The reply was "that the repeated acts of violence and aggression lately committed by the French Government have made a due impression on the minds of the Ministers of his Imperial Majesty. No arguments are necessary to convince the Cabinet of St. Petersburg that by arms alone the independence of Europe can be recovered."[3]

The third European coalition, then, was founded upon a treaty, offensive and defensive, concluded between Great Britain and Russia on 11th April 1805. Four months later, the Emperor of Austria, alarmed by the coronation of Napoleon as King of Italy, by his annexation of

[1] The letter and reply are printed at length in the *Annual Register*, 1805.

[2] Lord Mulgrave to Lord G. L. Gower, 21st Jan. 1805. (F.O. Russia, vol. 57.) The reference to the "ordinary forms," &c., is in connection with Napoleon being regarded as *de facto* ruler, not *de jure*, by the crowned heads, who spoke and wrote about him as Monsieur Bonaparte.

[3] Lord G. L. Gower to Lord Harrowby, 5th Feb. 1805. (Ibid.)

the Genoese republic, and by other acts perpetrated and threatened, joined the alliance, and was followed by Gustavus IV., the crazy King of Sweden. Half a million of troops were to be put in the field, England being bound to pay £1,150,000 a year for every 100,000 men maintained by her allies. The French were to be swept out of Northern Germany; independence was to be restored to Holland and Switzerland, Piedmont to the King of Sardinia, who was also to receive Genoa, Savoy, and Nice, while the Emperor of Austria should re-enter upon possession of Lombardy. Prussia, with her magnificent army, stood stiffly on her neutrality, bribed thereto by the promise of the cession of Hanover, which Napoleon had held since 1803. She was to pay cruelly in the end for her indifference to the fate of Europe.

"Vous voulez donc la guerre?" said the French ambassador at Vienna, M. de la Rochefoucault, to the Austrian Minister Count Cobentzel; "et bien, vous l'aurez!" This was in August, when Austria had nearly a quarter of a million of men under arms in Bohemia, Italy, the Tyrol, and at Wels, between Vienna and the Bavarian frontier.

The Russian forces were still so distant and so unready that it was just within limits of physical possibility that Napoleon could deal with the Austrians before their allies were in the field. On the very morning that he heard of Villeneuve's disobedience, he dismissed the invasion of England from his thoughts, as one might dismiss a picnic spoilt by bad weather. The flat-bottomed flotilla was broken up for firewood: in five great columns the "Army of England" marched swiftly and secretly to the Rhine; Mack, the Austrian commander-in-chief, moving up to meet the menace so soon as its object became clear. A fine display he made, with a front extending along the Iller from Ulm to Memmingen—rear safe enough, no doubt. Might have been, at least, had not Napoleon, in breaking up from Boulogne, ordered Marmont in Holland and Bernadotte in Hanover to collect all their forces and march with speed upon the Danube. No sooner, therefore, did Mack feel Napoleon in his front than he became aware of another

Napoleon marches against the Austrians, Sept. 1805.

army in his rear, whose presence he had never suspected. Ignominious result—capitulation of Ulm, 19th October, 30,000 fine troops laying down their arms to Napoleon, as Werneck's corps had done to Murat on the 18th. So much for Mack; but there remained 150,000 Austrian troops to be dealt with. After Ulm, Napoleon marched to Münich, where he reinstated his friend the Elector of Bavaria; thence he moved along the south bank of the Danube, driving the Austrians before him, and entered Vienna on 13th November. The Russian army having effected a junction with the Austrian at Olmutz in Moravia, Napoleon touched his military zenith on 2nd December, inflicting a terrible defeat on the allies in the battle of Austerlitz. The Emperor of Austria hastily sued for peace; the Emperor of Russia marched back to his dominions: the Emperor of the French remained master of continental Europe.

Battle of Austerlitz, 2nd Dec. 1805.

Meanwhile, the British army had been made to play the old game of costly and ineffective diversion. When Bernadotte evacuated Hanover to co-operate with Napoleon in Bavaria, 12,000 troops sailed from the Downs under Lieut.-General Don for the recovery of that dominion. A second expedition of 12,000 sailed for the Weser on 10th December; was driven back by storms, and sailed again on the 22nd. Eight out of 257 transports were lost, with 2000 troops on board, of whom 600 or 700 perished, the remainder being made prisoners in Holland. The Hanoverian enterprise came to nought.

British expedition to Hanover, Nov. 1805.

Parliament was to meet on 21st January 1806; on the 9th Pitt left Bath for London to prepare for the session. He was already within the shadow of death. Melville, Ulm, Austerlitz—the successive blows, though they could not daunt the spirit, broke down the enfeebled frame. As he entered his villa at Putney, it is said that he noticed a map of Europe hanging on the wall. "Roll up that map," he moaned to his niece, Lady Hester Stanhope; "it will not be wanted these ten years."[1] He died on the morning

[1] Stanhope's *Pitt*, iv. 369.

of 23rd January. Parliament, which four years previously had offered an unexampled tribute to Pitt while living,[1] now again gave testimony without parallel to its sense of his services. The House of Commons unanimously voted £40,000 towards the payment of his private debt. "Never in my life," said Fox, "did I give a vote with more satisfaction than I shall do this night in support of this motion." Less remarkable, according to the practice of those days, however much at variance it would be with that of our own, was the grant of pensions to Pitt's nieces—£1200 to Lady Hester Stanhope, and £600 a year to each of her sisters.

Death of Pitt, Jan. 23, 1806.

In dismissing the lonely figure of the great Tory Minister to the shades, a very brief glance must suffice upon his acts as an administrator and his standing among British statesmen. To attempt more would involve trespass upon a century anterior to the limits of this work; to found an estimate upon the last six years of a life such as his would be worthless; for, as Lord Rosebery has well said, "No man can understand Pitt without saturating himself with the French Revolution."[2] It is our privilege to contemplate that stupendous event at the distance of more than a century; our nerves are equal to the most exacting scrutiny of its causes, course, and consequences. But it is easy to overlook or misinterpret its influence upon the actions of those responsible for the conduct of affairs through that most searching crisis. Shall we attempt to stem the deluge and preserve the old landmarks, or must we prepare to embark upon the torrent, trusting to find safety upon some more tranquil shore when the fury of the tempest has spent itself? There was no middle course; the principles of revolution must be accepted or fought. Fox was taking no middle course when he hailed the French Provisional Government as "the most stupendous and glorious edifice of liberty which had been erected on the foundation of human integrity in any time or country." And Pitt took no middle course when, wielding the immense parliamentary influence of the Crown, securing the confidence and con-

Character of Pitt.

[1] See p. 31 *ante*.

[2] Lord Rosebery's *Pitt*, p. 280.

firming the courage of the aristocracy, drawing to himself the unbounded support of the commercial and agricultural classes, he abandoned the schemes of reform to which alike by disposition and purpose he inclined, put at stake the unprecedented advance in national prosperity which had been the glory of the first nine years of his administration,[1] and set his front for war.

Pitt's detractors—and they are many and persistent—complain, as the Opposition complained at the time, of his harsh repression of political agitators, of his arbitrary suspensions of the *Habeas Corpus*, of the enormous debt incurred during the course of the war. As to the first two causes of offence, it is the height of unreason to denounce a statesman, resolute against revolutionary doctrine and practice, for employing the only constitutional means at his disposal for preventing the dissemination of the one and the establishment of the other among the subjects of King George. He is not to be blamed because these means were applied with extravagant severity by panic-stricken judges and magistrates, any more than he can be held responsible for the sanguinary criminal code of the day. What should be thought of a householder, whose premises and property had been preserved by the fire-brigade from the conflagration raging next door, if he whimpered about the damage wrought by water upon his wall-paper? The danger was real—imminent—however much the perspective of a century may have lessened it in the prospect from a nineteenth-century arm-chair.

The third objection to Pitt's later administration—the volume of debt it involved—rests only upon the excellent general principle that current expenses should be met from revenue, not capital. Pitt preferred the hazard of war to the humiliation of his country and the destruction of its constitution, perhaps of its independence: at his back were the whole of his own party, a large section of the Opposition, as well as the general national sentiment; shall he be

[1]

Year	1784	1793
Imports	£11,690,000	£19,000,000
Exports	£14,330,000	£24,560,000

In January 1784 the 3 per cent. Consols stood at 57¾; in January 1792, at 93⅜.

blamed then, because, having chosen war, he did not boggle at the cost of making it effective? Pitt's courage rose to an emergency which must have quenched a feebler, aye, a gentler spirit; his estimate of the nature and extent of the peril was fully vindicated by the subsequent course of the Republic, the Consulate, and the Empire; and although he did not live to see the end of the struggle to which he committed his country, his principles and example shone the pole-star of his successors during many stormy years.

Rearrangement of parties, Feb. 1806.

From time to time, at rare intervals, the routine of parliamentary life is disturbed, the balance of party rudely swayed, by the disappearance of a commanding figure from the popular chamber. Such occasions remain in living memory, as when Mr. Disraeli went to the House of Lords in 1876, and when Mr. Gladstone retired from public life in 1894. The very dimensions of the House of Commons seemed to contract, bringing into sudden prominence figures which had attracted only moderate notice before.

So it was when Pitt's place on the Treasury Bench was filled by another. Had the lead fallen to Canning, the descent had not been so abrupt; for the House had learnt that Canning was worth a hearing, were it only for the pleasure of listening to English at its best—English, as it is the gift of very few to use it—the instrument of flashing retort, delicate raillery, or merciless invective. But Castlereagh, Pitt's only Cabinet colleague in the Commons, though he charmed all men by his courtesy and handsome presence, cast no spell upon them by his speech. Frequent, but unfluent, he conveyed his meaning intelligibly, but with a thick utterance, and without the slightest advantage from rhythm or elegance. Men missed the sonorous periods of the lost leader—him of whom Fox confessed that, although he himself was never at a loss for words, Pitt always had at command the best words possible. And oratory, be it noted, was of far more importance in a leader at that time than it has become since. Very few men spoke from back benches, except in opposition; practically the rank and file behind Ministers supported them only by their votes and

cheers. The arguments for government measures came from the Treasury Bench only; hence the intolerable length of speeches. If Fox occupied three hours in attack, as he often did, Pitt was expected to fill at least two hours in reply. And two hours of Castlereagh could not be reckoned exhilarating. Perhaps this consideration, as much as any other, convinced men of the necessity for a change of administration.

Lord Rosebery has disposed of Pitt's Cabinet colleagues as "flaccid and null";[1] a grudging estimate of such men as Castlereagh, Hawkesbury,[2] and Eldon, who, however inconspicuous in the immediate wake of Pitt, played no mean part in the momentous drama of later years. Outside the Cabinet such promising recruits as Canning, Perceval, and Huskisson stood in waiting; yet if administrative ability was not lacking among the Pittites, in debating power they were no match for a composite Opposition which could always throw Fox, Sheridan, and Windham into the fighting line, and on critical occasions even calculate upon the influential support of Wilberforce.[3]

After all, what made the position of Ministers impossible was the utter collapse of their Continental policy. Against the disastrous failure of the coalition of Powers and the abortive expedition to Hanover, the old Cabinet could set only the victory of Trafalgar, and he who had earned for them that glory would hoist his flag never more. Bereft of Pitt and Nelson, Hawkesbury might well despair of the public confidence. He declined the King's invitation to take the reins, and Lord Grenville was bidden to exchange the silvan seclusion of Dropmore for the disquiet of Downing Street. Skimming the cream of the old and new Opposition in both Houses of Parliament, he constructed a Cabinet derisively hailed as "All the Talents." Grenville and Fox, the champions respectively of a warlike policy and of peace at almost any price, had struck up

Resignation of the Government, Jan. 1806.

"All the talents" administration, 1806-7.

[1] Lord Rosebery's *Pitt*, p. 262.

[2] Became 2nd Earl of Liverpool in 1808.

[3] Wilberforce's principle was to support the King's Government, whatever it was, whenever he could do so conscientiously. It is remarkable how often his conscience directed him into the Opposition lobby.

an inseparable alliance, rooted in their common earnestness for Roman Catholic emancipation. Perhaps the most remarkable act in Grenville's life was his success in persuading the King to accept Fox as Secretary of State—Fox, whom the King had dismissed from office in 1783, whom he had struck off the list of his Privy Councillors in 1798, whom he had too much cause to blame for the Prince of Wales's unfilial conduct and dissipated life—Fox, of whom he had declared in 1804 that "he had taken a positive determination not to admit him into his councils, even at the risk of civil war." It is true that Fox gave a pledge to refrain from stirring the Roman Catholic question. Let not this be forgotten, as it seems sometimes to be, by those who censure Pitt for having given a similar pledge; and let it be noted that the reasons in both cases were identical. "I am determined," said Fox, "not to annoy my sovereign by bringing it forward."

Fitzwilliam, Sidmouth, Moira, and Spencer in the Lords, Henry Petty,[1] Windham, and Charles Grey[2] in the Commons, filled other Cabinet posts; Lord Erskine replaced Eldon on the woolsack, and Lord Ellenborough entered the Cabinet without a department, much objected to by constitutionalists, seeing that he continued to be Lord Chief-Justice. The only precedent for such an appointment, that of Mansfield, had made the evil manifest of making one who, in the event of a State trial, must be a judge, member also of the prosecuting body.

Sidmouth, the only Tory in the new Cabinet—Sidmouth, whom Canning had lampooned in the clumsy couplet—

> "Pitt is to Addington
> What London is to Paddington"[3]

—Sidmouth owed his admission among All the Talents

[1] Became 3rd Marquess of Lansdowne in 1809. The confusion of party lines in 1806 was illustrated when Petty sought re-election for Cambridge on appointment as Chancellor of the Exchequer. He was opposed by both Lord Palmerston and Lord Althorp, each of whom should in future years lead the House of Commons as members of Whig administrations. Moreover, Lord Althorp's father, Earl Spencer, had accepted office as Home Secretary in the Grenville Cabinet.

[2] Succeeded as 2nd Earl Grey in 1807.

[3] Paddington was then a village sequestered among green pastures and hedgerows.

certainly not to his administrative or oratorical gifts, but to his friendship with both King and Prince. He was a link between the Court and Carlton House, hitherto wielding their power in Parliament relentlessly against each other. The position is naïvely explained in the dispassionate pages of the *Annual Register*:—

"The united strength of both [sections of the old Opposition] did not exceed 150 members in the House of Commons, a number which, though perfectly sufficient for undertaking the government of this country when accompanied by the cordial support of the Crown, is far from being equal to that service when destitute of that advantage. . . . In addition to all these reasons for preferring a connection with Lord Sidmouth to a coalition with the ex-ministers, it was understood that the introduction of Lord Sidmouth into the Cabinet was a measure not unacceptable at Carlton House."

Ardently as Fox longed for peace with France, he seemed as far as ever from realising those dreams in which he had revelled during two-and-twenty years of opposition. With Grenville as his chief, he could not have committed the Government to any of those overtures which he had so passionately advocated, but for a curious incident which befel shortly after he went to the Foreign Office. A certain Frenchman, landing at Gravesend without a passport, sought and received an interview with Fox, and invited his approval of a plot for the assassination of Napoleon. Fox indignantly bade him begone, and gave orders for his expulsion from the kingdom. Presently, changing his mind, he had the fellow detained, while a short statement of the facts was forwarded to the French Government. Talleyrand replied in effusive terms of gratitude. Fox, the friend of France, was in power at last; it was strange if that circumstance should not turn to the advantage of France. But here was not the same Fox who once chuckled over the treaty of Amiens as a victory for France over the British Government. Talleyrand informed him that his Emperor had announced to the French Chamber his earnest desire for peace on the Amiens basis; but in all the long correspondence which followed, Fox, while cordially reciprocating Napoleon's wish for peace,

Negotiations for peace with France, March–Sept. 1806.

remained staunch to one cardinal point—he declined to discuss the preliminaries of any treaty to which Russia, the ally of Great Britain, should not be admitted a party. In vain did Talleyrand tempt him by offering to concede everything else that was in dispute between the two governments—George III. was to retain Malta and receive back Hanover; other disputed territories were to be dealt with according to *uti possidetis:* English prisoners in France were to be set free. Fox was not to be hoodwinked. He thoroughly understood Napoleon's system of breaking up hostile alliances by buying off one partner after another before he attacked them in detail.

Foiled by Fox, Talleyrand changed his note. He demanded that Great Britain should cede Sicily, which she occupied on behalf of the King of Naples, to the Emperor Napoleon as King of Italy; and endeavoured secretly to induce Russia to sign an independent treaty. He succeeded so far as to induce M. d'Oubril, the Russian plenipotentiary, to sign provisionally a separate treaty, which d'Oubril took away to submit to the Emperor Alexander, without communicating it to the British plenipotentiary. But Alexander, not less loyal than Fox, indignantly refused to ratify the treaty, and dismissed d'Oubril in disgrace. No hope of treachery in that quarter, then; wherefore Napoleon, after renewing the attempt to induce Great Britain to make a separate peace, flung off the mask, and caused Talleyrand to assume such a tone with the British plenipotentiary, Lord Lauderdale, as left him no choice but to demand his passports.[1] Lauderdale left Paris early in October. By that time Fox was no more. The fine courage with which he dealt with French intrigues throughout the spring and summer of 1806 was the more admirable because of the bodily suffering which he endured. After long lingering,

[1] "France does not pretend to dictate either to Russia or to England, but she will be dictated to by neither of these powers. Let the conditions be equal, just, and moderate, and the peace is concluded; but if an imperious and exaggerating disposition is shown, if pre-eminence is affected, if, in a word, it is meant to *dictate* peace, the Emperor and the French people will not even notice these proposals. Confident in themselves, they will say, as a nation of antiquity answered its enemies, 'You demand our arms—*come and take them!*'" (*Note* [translated] *from M. Talleyrand to the Earl of Lauderdale.* 18th Sept. 1806.)

he died of dropsy on 13th September, and was laid in Westminster Abbey beside the grave of his great rival, Pitt. Never did public man secure more ample tribute of private affection—"a man made to be loved," as Burke owned, with a sob in the sentence, years after all intercourse between them had been violently broken. In an age when high play was the fashionable vice, Fox made himself the wonder of the town by prodigious gambling. George III. held him responsible for the Prince of Wales's excesses; yet, so resistless was the man's personal charm, that the old King, once he brought himself to receive him as a Minister, came under the spell as completely as everybody else. "Little did I think," said he to Sidmouth, "that I should ever live to regret Mr. Fox's death."

Death of Fox, 13th Sept. 1806.

As a parliamentary orator, probably Fox has never been surpassed. Burke, Pitt, Sir James Mackintosh, Samuel Rogers, and a host of other contemporaries unite in pronouncing him incomparable in debate. Charles Butler has distilled in a sentence a vivid impression of his power:—

> "The moment of his grandeur was when, after he had stated the argument of his adversary with much greater strength than the adversary had done, and with much greater than his hearers thought possible, he seized it with the strength of a giant, and tore and trampled it to destruction."

Fox was as reckless in the exercise of this superb gift as he was in squandering his fortune and his health. Making all allowance for the greater licence of speech and action claimed by the "Outs," as distinguished from the "Ins," his condemnation is found in the insignificance to which he reduced his natural following in Parliament. Although he twice held office in Tory administrations,[1] there need be no doubt of the sincerity of his conversion to Liberal principles, especially of his advocacy of freedom of speech and freedom of the press. But even the select band which clave to him in his later years learnt to dread the lengths which he went

[1] As a Lord of the Admiralty, 1770–72, and a Lord of the Treasury, 1773–74, both under Lord North.

in praise of the French revolution.[1] Not all his magnetic earnestness of voice and manner could dispel the impression that Fox treated politics as a great game of chance, and party debates as a game of skill. Principle should be professed, or there were an end of party; but it should be a servant, not a master—a means, not an end. The famous scene of Burke's rupture with Fox in 1791 brought into startling contrast the mere parliamentary gladiator, scrupling not to identify himself with any set of opinions, so he might hamper and confuse his adversary, and the man of passionate conviction who flinched not from the sacrifice of friendship rather than associate with the advocate of revolution.

The shades of evening had begun to close upon this vigorous life when Fox at last applied himself to atone for the prodigal misuse of his ability in its prime. Endeared as he was to his contemporaries by inimitable charm and gentle disposition, proudly as his memory is still cherished by his party as one of Parliament's brightest stars, yet when he passed from the scene no man could lay finger upon any one act which he had performed of signal service to his country, save the conduct of those difficult negotiations with France during his last brief months at the Foreign Office. That, indeed, gave a glimpse of the heights to which Fox might have risen as a Minister; and, even in an age when party could scarcely be distinguished from faction, one intellect at least rose superior to both and paid fitting tribute to the part borne by a political opponent:—

> "If ever from an English heart,
> Oh, here let prejudice depart,
> And, partial feeling cast aside,
> Record that Fox a Briton died!
> When Europe crouched to France's yoke,
> And Austria bent and Prussia broke,
> And the firm Russian's purpose brave
> Was bartered by a timorous slave;[2]

[1] "I went yesterday to the opening of our campaign, with some apprehension, I confess, as I knew Fox was to be there, lest his sentiments upon the subject of France and England should diminish my esteem for him. . . . God continue Fox's prudence and Pitt's gout!" (*Creevey Papers*, i. 9.)

[2] M. d'Oubril, who signed the provisional treaty repudiated by the Emperor Alexander.

Emery Walker. Phot.

Charles James Fox.

From the painting by Karl Anton Hickel

FOREIGN & COLONIAL ARCHIVES 1903.

Ev'n then dishonour's peace he spurn'd,
Her sullied olive branch return'd,
Stood for his country's glory fast,
And nailed her colours to the mast." [1]

The British occupation of Sicily, so obnoxious to Napoleon's European scheme, dated from the autumn of 1805, when, to create a diversion in favour of the Austrian army opposed to Massena in Lombardy, 14,000 Russians and 10,000 British were landed at Naples. The battle of Austerlitz brought about the peace of Presburg between France and Austria (26th December), whereupon the Russian contingent was withdrawn, leaving Sir James Craig, commanding the British division, exposed to greatly superior forces under Joseph Bonaparte. Ferdinand IV. of Naples having already sought safety in Sicily in January 1806, Craig evacuated Naples and followed him thither, supported by a strong fleet under Sir Sidney Smith. Craig's strategic position in the island was important and perfectly secure, and he paid no heed to the importunity of King Ferdinand and his Court when they urged him to make an expedition against the French in Calabria. But Craig fell ill in April, and resigned the command to Sir John Stuart, who was not so discreet. Not content with holding Sicily, which he could easily do, protected by the fleet, Stuart landed at Santa Eufemia on 1st July with no more than 4800 troops, in the assurance that the whole Calabrian peasantry were ready to rise for the expulsion of the French.

On 6th July the British attacked and completely defeated 7000 troops under General Regnier at Maida—a very brilliant feat of arms, but barren of any lasting result. The peasantry rose, indeed, and the French were forced to evacuate both Upper and Lower Calabria; but Stuart was quite unable to maintain his small force upon the territory he had gained. By the end of the month he was back in the Sicilian quarters which he ought never to have quitted.

Battle of Maida, 4th July 1806.

Hitherto Frederic Wilhelm III. of Prussia had refused every overture to join the coalition against Napoleon, having sundry substantial reasons for remaining neutral. Nearly

[1] Introduction to the first canto of *Marmion*, published in 1808.

half his dominion consisted of Polish territory, assigned to his father in the partitions of 1793 and 1795; and in 1805 he received from Napoleon the promise of King George's electorate of Hanover. But in August 1806, when the Germanic Confederation was dissolved, the Confederacy of the Rhine was formed under protection of Napoleon, and still the promised cession of Hanover was delayed, Prussian statesmen began to feel uneasy about the position of their own country. On the top of all this they learnt with indignation that the restoration of Hanover to England had been offered to Fox as an inducement to make peace—Hanover, the price promised to Prussia for her neutrality!

Napoleon, having deluded Prussia into inaction so long as her action would have been dangerous, no longer cared to keep her quiet. Austria was out of the field: let Prussia, with her army of 250,000, come on. On 9th October war was declared by Prussia against France. Napoleon dealt with her precisely as he had dealt with Austria. The Russian army was on the march, but long before it could reach the seat of war he carried 200,000 troops from Bavaria and Swabia, overwhelmed the Prussian armies at Jena and Auerstädt on 14th October, and entered Berlin, a conqueror, on the 27th. Next, as in the campaign of Austerlitz, he advanced to meet the Russians, fought a drawn battle with them (perhaps the bloodiest of the century) at Eylau on 7th and 8th February 1807, and finally crushed them at Friedland on 14th June. Even then, had Austria struck in, Napoleon's position would have been critical; but Napoleon often was saved by the quarrels of his adversaries. Prussia had stirred no hand in aid of Austria after Austerlitz; even so, Austria remained passive in the hour of Prussia's extremity. Shorn of half her territory, Prussia sank to the grade of a third-rate Power, towed in the wake of French aggression.

Battles of Jena and Auerstädt, 14th Oct. 1806.

CHAPTER IV

Marquess Wellesley's Indian Administration—Threatening attitude of the Marhattás—First Marhattá War—Recapture of Poona—Battle of Assaye—Second Marhattá War—Destruction of Monson's column—Resignation of Lord Wellesley—Proceedings against him—Napoleon renews the Continental System—The Orders in Council—Fall of "All the Talents"—The Portland Administration—George Canning—Sir Arthur Wellesley—Treaty of Tilsit—Expedition to Copenhagen—Bombardment of Copenhagen—Whitelocke's disaster in Buenos Ayres.

NELSON, Pitt, Fox—within twelve months the three foremost figures in the Empire had fallen, and the European policy of Great Britain seemed to have failed beyond redemption. In Asia, on the contrary, her star was steadily in the ascendant.

At the beginning of the nineteenth century, and for nearly sixty years after, British India was administered under a very complex system of government. All official appointments, except those of the Governor-General and two or three others, were made by the directors of the East India Company, a trading association founded on a charter by Queen Elizabeth in 1600, and, like all similar bodies of that period, equipped with militant and administrative as well as commercial privileges. By Pitt's India Act of 1784 a Board of Control was created, practically a committee of the Cabinet, with power to revise the acts of the directors, and represented in Parliament by a President and Secretary. The Governor of Bengal was *ex officio* Governor-General of India; although appointed by the King on the advice of the Cabinet, he was also responsible in some matters to the Court of Directors.

Lord Mornington, afterwards Marquess Wellesley, became Governor-General in 1798, with very well defined and vigorous views upon Indian policy, which were fully shared by his friend Pitt. He found the Company at peace in all its borders, but surrounded by much material for

strife. The French had lost much ground in India, but the victories of the Republic over the most ancient European monarchies fired them to fresh enterprise. Bonaparte laid hands upon Malta and Egypt in 1798, with the avowed object of destroying British ascendency in the East; French officers were busy drilling and organising the forces of various native princes; alliance between the French Republic and Tipú Sultan of Mysore was openly proclaimed. Lord Wellesley having, by a timely display of force, induced the Nizám of Hyderabad and the princes of the Marhattá confederacy to enter into treaties and to dismiss the Frenchmen in their service, turned his attention to Tipú, who, having received Bonaparte's assurance that a "countless and invincible army" was on its way for the expulsion of the British, needlessly protracted negotiations, until, on 22nd February 1799, Lord Wellesley declared war against him, and the third Mysore campaign ended on 4th May 1799, with the storming of Seringapatam by the troops under General Baird and the death of brave Tipú, musket in hand, in the breach.

Marquess Wellesley's Indian administration, 1798-1805.

Thereafter the territory of Mysore was divided between the representative of the Hindú dynasty (which Tipú's father, Hyder Ali, had driven from the throne), the Company, and its allies, the Nizám of Hyderabad and the Peshwá of Poona. At the same time, the dominions of the Nawab of Arcot and the Marhattá principality of Tanjore were brought under British rule, comprising most of what is now the Presidency of Madras.

Lord Wellesley's brilliant success in destroying French influence at the native courts and adding vastly to the Company's dominions did not save him from hostile criticism at home. Clive, it was well known, had amassed a vast fortune during his administration; groundless stories were afloat as to the manner in which Wellesley was enriching himself and his brothers. The Court of Directors, also, alarmed at the cost of the Mysore campaign, directed him to reduce the Indian military establishment, which he knew could not be done without imperilling the British position. Wellesley therefore tendered his resignation; but

the gathering of a fresh storm caused the Court to request him earnestly to continue at his post.

Attitude of the Marhattás, 1801–1802.

The menace came from the great Marhattá nation, nominally friendly to the British, but difficult at all times to deal with, owing to its peculiar constitution. It was, in fact, a confederacy of states, representing the empire founded by Sevajee in 1680 upon the ruins of the realm of Aurangzeb, ruled by five princes—namely, the Peshwá of Poona, nominal suzerain of the rest, Sindhia of Gwalior, Holkar of Indore, the Gaikwar of Baroda, and the Bhonsla Rájá of Nágpur. Each was at liberty to form alliances independently of the others, but all attempts to make a treaty with the whole nation had failed hitherto, owing to chronic difference and jealousy among the chiefs themselves. Early in 1802, Wellesley concluded a defensive alliance with the Gaikwar, but Holkar and Sindhia still remained under French influence, their fine and numerous troops being instructed and commanded by French officers. The Peshwá, not averse from a treaty with the British, was restrained by Sindhia, whose power at the court of Poona was paramount at that time. Presently, however, Holkar conceived the idea of supplanting Sindhia as the head of the Marhattá confederacy. Suddenly setting in motion his army of 80,000 men, chiefly cavalry, he attacked and routed the combined forces of the Peshwá on 25th October 1802. The Peshwá besought protection from the British, with whom he signed a treaty, offensive and defensive, at Bassein on 31st December.

The First Marhattá War, 1803.

Hitherto Lord Wellesley had firmly rejected the advice of those who urged him to anticipate the unfriendly designs of Holkar and Sindhia by commencing hostilities against them; but now—*divide et impera!* the great Marhattá nation was plunged in civil war; action was forced upon the Indian Government by the obligation to recover Poona for their ally the Peshwá. General Stuart lay in observation on the north-west frontier of Mysore with a corps of 20,000, and the Nizám's contingent of 8000 or 9000 were on the march from Hyderabad. Active operations against Holkar were entrusted to the

Governor-General's brother Arthur, a young major-general of three-and-thirty, distinguished, at present, only for extraordinary and unfashionable diligence in those details of his profession which it had become the custom of British regimental officers to leave to quartermasters and sergeants; greatly envied, however, for the rapid promotion he enjoyed in virtue of his aristocratic connections. Arthur Wellesley, having learnt already how the thing ought *not* to be done, in the disastrous winter of 1794–95, when he commanded the 33rd Foot under the Duke of York in the Netherlands campaign, was now given the opportunity of showing a better way.

The 15th April 1803 saw General Wellesley at Aklooss, within Marhattá territory, in command of 19,000 troops, formed of a division of General Stuart's army and the Hyderabad contingent. He began his advance on Poona immediately, but found it impossible to keep his unwieldy force together in a country which Holkar had completely devastated. Indian armies invariably were accompanied by non-combatants three or four times in excess of their effective force, besides draught bullocks in multitude scarcely to be imagined by a European.[1] Wellesley therefore divided his force, sending the Hyderabad contingent under Colonel Stevenson to cover the Nizam's frontier. Holkar, in retiring to the north, had left Amrut Rao as Governor in Poona, towards which city Wellesley now directed his advance. On the morning of 19th April, leaving his infantry, he pressed forward with three regiments of cavalry only, and on the 20th, having traversed sixty miles of very difficult country in thirty-four hours, surprised the garrison and took possession of the capital without a blow struck or a shot fired. The Peshwá was restored to his throne on 13th May.

Recapture of Poona, 20th April 1803.

Now Sindhia had been the Peshwá's ally against Holkar, but he remained so only so long as the Peshwá was his obedient tool. The Peshwá, supported by British troops,

[1] In 1799, when General Harris invaded Mysore with a force of 35,000, his camp-followers were estimated at 120,000. General Wellesley informed General St. Leger that the bullocks of his army numbered 88,000, besides 20,000 belonging to the brinjarries or grain-merchants. (Wellington's *Supplementary Despatches*, i. 204.)

was no manner of use to him, wherefore Sindhia, rejecting friendly overtures from General Wellesley, made peace with Holkar, and took the field with the Rájá of Berar against the British. On 11th August Wellesley captured the stronghold of Ahmadnagar, thereby making secure his communications with Poona. On 23rd September he found himself, with 7500 troops and 17 guns, unexpectedly in presence of the combined forces of Sindhia and the Rájá, 50,000 strong, with 128 guns. These were entrenched on the left bank of the river Kaitna; while on the right bank, where the British had halted, moved strong bodies of Marhattá horse. It was a desperate dilemma, brought about by ineffective scouting and reliance upon lying natives. Wellesley had the choice of but two courses—either to fall back upon Naulniah, exposed to the enemy's cavalry and therefore compelled to abandon his baggage, or to attack Sindhia and the Rájá, strongly entrenched on the far side of a river, through which he was assured there was no ford. Moreover, while the Marhattá army had been reposing many days in camp, Wellesley's little column had already marched sixteen miles that morning.

Battle of Assaye, 23rd Sept. 1803.

The young general did not add to the danger by irresolution. Let those critics who have slighted his strategy in later years as Fabian take account of this day's work. "I determined upon attack immediately." [1] The result was one of the most amazing victories in modern war. Marching four miles at high noon across the Marhattá front, the river flowing between the two armies, Wellesley reached a point where two villages stood opposite each other upon either bank of the stream. Here, if anywhere, the Kaitna must be fordable; the natives denied it, but Wellesley vowed it must be so, and sent his Highlanders boldly forward. Fiercely torn by grape and chain-shot, the advanced guard stemmed the current breast-high, and effected a lodgment on the far side, followed by the 74th and 78th Highlanders and four Sepoy battalions, which formed up for attack in three lines, covered by the 19th Light Dragoons, not more than 5000 in all. Wellesley had seventeen field-pieces, but the

[1] Wellesley to Sir T. Munro (*Suppl. Despatches*, iv. 211).

gun-bullocks were nearly all shot down at the ford; bayonets and bullets must do the work. To meet this flank attack, Sindhia changed front in excellent order, throwing back his left and bringing up his right, thereby resting his right flank on the Kaitna and his left on a tributary stream which joined the other a short way below the ford. The thin British lines moved steadily forward against those massive columns, under a short-range fire from the Marhattá batteries, till the Highlanders could see white in the eyes of Sindhia's front rank. Then they halted to pour in two rounds of musketry, and before the smoke could clear away the war-pipes were yelling out the charge. The scene changed quickly. The first Marhattá line broke before the bayonets; its great batteries fell silent, its squadrons scattering carried wreck into the second line; before six o'clock the combined armies of Sindhia and the Rájá were in full retreat towards Burrampoor, leaving on the field 1200 dead, 102 guns, and nearly all their camp equipage. The victors paid dearly for their triumph. Seventy-nine officers and 1778 soldiers were killed and wounded, 43 officers being slain outright. The character of the combat was shown in the fact that nearly all the wounds among the British were from cannon shot.

The rest of the campaign is soon told. The Marhattá power was effectively broken on 27th November, when Wellesley, with 18,000 men, overtook Sindhia and the Rájá by a forced march at Argáon and completely defeated them, putting the finishing touches to their dispersal a few days later at Gawilghar.

Meanwhile a column under General Lake, advancing from Cawnpore, defeated Sindhia's forces in pitched battles at Alighur and Láswári, and captured the cities of Delhi and Agra; Colonel Harcourt occupied the district of Cuttack belonging to the Rájá of Berar; and, before the close of the year, General Wellesley concluded treaties of peace with Sindhia and the Rájá, whereby Delhi, Agra, Broach, and Ahmadnagar passed under British administration.

Holkar had taken no part in hostilities after his retreat from Poona, beholding with indifference the misfortunes of his hated rival Sindhia; but Sindhia's treaty of peace with

the British was the signal for Holkar to resume hostilities. A terrible calamity marked the outset of this second Marhattá campaign. Colonel Monson, marching with 12,000 men to co-operate with Colonel Murray's column in an attack upon Indore, found himself confronted by Holkar's cavalry in the Mokundra Pass, and attempted to retreat. The result shows what might have befallen General Wellesley had he adopted similar tactics at Assaye.[1] The retreat became a disorderly flight; the column was completely cut to pieces; Monson reached Agra with barely one-tenth of his entire force.

Second Marhattá War, 1804.

Destruction of Monson's column, July 1804.

General Wellesley was not employed in the operations against Holkar, having returned to his post as administrator of Seringapatam. General Lake, who had been created a peer, obtained some minor successes against the Marhattá armies, but, after spending more than three months in besieging Bhartpur, was repulsed in four successive attempts to carry it by storm, and was compelled to raise the siege. This reverse, following upon Monson's calamity, was too much for the nerves of the Court of Directors. They disapproved of Lord Wellesley's spirited policy as likely to lead to further wars, and he, who had only consented to retain the governor-generalship until the Marhattá nation should be subdued, despaired of carrying his purpose, and for the second time sent in his resignation, although Holkar was still in the field and Sindhia was preparing for fresh hostilities. Then took place what might be expected from a board of well-fed gentlemen attempting to administer British India from a parlour in Leadenhall Street. Lord Cornwallis, as a younger man, had proved himself an excellent Governor-General; but he was now old and broken in health. Nevertheless he was sent out a second time, with instructions to conclude peace with the Marhattás at almost

Resignation of Lord Wellesley, Aug. 1805.

[1] "Monson's retreat, defeats, disgraces, and disasters are woful examples of the risk to be incurred by advancing too far without competent supplies, and of the danger of attempting to retreat before such an army as Holkar's is. He would have done much better to attack Holkar at once, and he would probably have put an end to the war." (Wellington's *Supplementary Despatches*, iv. 466.)

any cost. He died a few weeks after landing, and the task was entrusted to Sir George Barlow, a docile servant of John Company. He carried out his instructions to the letter, gravely compromising British honour and prestige in the process. Holkar and Sindhia were bribed into peace by handing over to them the territory of Rájputana, in violation of Lord Wellesley's solemn pledge to maintain the Rájput tribes against their ancient aggressors, the Marhattás. A dangerous precedent, inasmuch as the inviolate observance of engagements has ever been the mainstay of British ascendency over subject races.

Lord Wellesley's policy, though little understood by his countrymen at the time, has been amply vindicated in the judgment of their posterity. Assuming the government when French influence, supreme in Mysore, Hyderabad, and the vast Marhattá states, was directed wholly against the presence of the British in India, he took the only measures by which the dominion he had come to rule could be preserved. There was no middle course between conquest and ultimate evacuation. He chose the former, which brought about the extinction of French influence at the native courts, the addition of forty millions of population and ten millions of revenue to British possessions, and the permanent establishment of Great Britain as the paramount power in the peninsula.

Dazed by the rapidity and extent of their Governor-General's conquests, the Directors were as much disquieted by his peace expenditure as by his war budgets. In his statesmanlike scheme for a government college at Fort William, where young men should be trained to civil administration, they could not see beyond the heavy cost in money. Also, they were terribly perturbed by Wellesley's design for removing certain fiscal restrictions upon trade, whereby their own monopoly might be grievously impaired. In short, the Directors only began to recover composure when that terrible pair of brothers, the Marquess and Sir Arthur, were safely on board ship and homeward bound.

The practical dismissal of the Governor-General gave the advanced wing of the Opposition in Parliament an

opportunity, which they were not likely to let slip, of striking at the Tories.

They found a mouthpiece and willing instrument in one James Paull, member for Newtown, the son of a tailor in Perth. Having engaged in trade in India, Paull had been expelled from the dominion of Oude by the Nawab, but was allowed to return at the instance of Lord Wellesley, with the result that he made a large fortune and returned to England. Straightway he exerted himself to obtain the impeachment of his benefactor "for high crimes and misdemeanours." Fox had from the first vehemently condemned Wellesley's Indian administration; but Fox by this time was invested with the responsibility of office, and had no relish for a repetition of the Warren Hastings case. He repeated his disapproval of Wellesley's warlike policy, but said that he had not made up his mind whether his alleged delinquencies were such as to merit impeachment, and did his utmost to shelve the question. But Paull would not be put off; he persisted in repeated motions on the subject until he lost his seat at the general election in the autumn of 1806. Lord Folkestone then took up the charges against Lord Wellesley, and they were finally disposed of on 15th March 1808 by 182 votes to 31 in the House of Commons. Paull, having ruined himself in gambling, committed suicide, and the main result of the whole proceedings against Lord Wellesley was the presence of his brother Sir Arthur in Parliament, which he entered as member for Rye, for the sole purpose of defending the Marquess's administration.

Proceedings against Lord Wellesley, 1805–8.

Convinced of the futility of attempting the overthrow of Great Britain by invasion, Napoleon turned to other means of destroying her power, and the English Government played well into his hands. Lord Grenville, by this time a stern Whig, proved as resolute as any Tory in prosecuting the war. By an extravagant exercise of belligerent rights, he had declared a blockade of the whole coast of Europe from Dantzig to Trieste, as being in the possession of France or her allies. Of course, even the sea-power of

Napoleon renews the Continental system, 21st Nov. 1806.

Great Britain, supreme as it was, could not render such a blockade effective; but it exposed foreign traders to constant risk, and created an amount of irritation which was all in favour of Napoleon's counterstroke. On 21st November 1806 he proclaimed the blockade of the British Isles, closed all the ports of France and her allies against vessels clearing from, or even touching at, British ports, and decreed the confiscation of all British goods or manufactures found in French territory. Hitherto British tradesmen had thriven upon the war, England was the workshop of the world. Napoleon could not keep his armies in the field without Yorkshire woollens and Northampton shoes, and was forced to honeycomb his system with special licences for his own supplies. Also, a gigantic smuggling trade sprang up, and English factories continued as busy as ever. But the carrying trade suffered so severely that the Government was fain to protect it by a series of Orders in Council, whereof the first was dated January 7, 1807, renewing the blockade of the French ports, and declaring all vessels of neutral nations trading to and from such ports to be lawful prize.

The Orders in Council, 1807.

Thus matters stood when the Grenville administration received its doom from the quarter least expected. Mr. Grey, who had become Lord Howick upon his father being created first Earl Grey, had succeeded Ford at the Foreign Office, and Fox's nephew, Lord Holland, had been admitted to the Cabinet. A general election in the autumn had added considerably to the strength of Ministers in the House of Commons; both Houses on reassembling had endorsed unanimously their war policy; all augury was for the stability of Government. The source of mischief was a clause introduced by Windham into the annual Mutiny Bill, abolishing the disability of Roman Catholics to hold military commissions. The grievance it proposed to redress was an imaginary, or at least a sentimental one, seeing that for many years the disability had not been enforced, and there were many Roman Catholics in the King's service both by sea and land. The King at first agreed to the clause; then, changing his mind, he declared

nothing should induce him to agree to it, and it was withdrawn. Unhappily, his Majesty's suspicions being very sensitive upon this matter of the Catholics, he demanded of his Ministers a written undertaking that they would never propose any concession to persons of that faith. They replied that they could not "give assurances which would impose upon them a restraint incompatible with the faithful discharge of the duty which they owed to his Majesty." The King insisted; Ministers persisted and on 25th March 1807 "All the Talents" quitted office.

Fall of the Grenville Ministry, 25th March 1807.

It has been the fashion to complain angrily of the monarch who thus marred two ministries because he disagreed with them on a single point. "The forces," says Mr. J. R. Green, "of ignorance and bigotry which had been too strong for Pitt were too strong for the Grenville ministry." In justice to King George it should be remembered that, in stubbornly maintaining the safeguards against Popish interference with national affairs, he was giving effect to an immense preponderance of feeling in England and Scotland. Few persons will dispute the reality of the original danger against which these safeguards had been designed; it is unphilosophical to brand as bigots those who were slower than others to realise that the danger had been dispelled. The King's consistency was exceedingly inconvenient to the Government, and in a less degree to the nation, but it was not discreditable. It was, besides, the last effort of an intellect which, though it had thrice rallied from violent derangement, was on the brink of being extinguished for ever.

The new Ministry was quickly formed under the nominal lead of the Duke of Portland, who at one time had led the Whig party, had been Prime Minister in the coalition of 1783, but had joined Burke's secession to Pitt after the French revolution.

The Portland Administration, 1807–9.

People might well ask of what mettle were these new Ministers of George III. Portland, verging on seventy and distracted with stone, was no more than a respectable figurehead; who was there behind him? Eldon we have

seen before on the woolsack; of Hawkesbury and Castlereagh also we have had some test. Perceval, the new Chancellor of the Exchequer, was in the prime of life, known to be bold and dexterous in debate and vehemently opposed to the Roman Catholic claims; chosen for these qualities in preference to Castlereagh as leader of the House of Commons; "a person of acute and quick, rather than of great, faculties."[1] Against Lord Bathurst there was nothing known to make people doubt that he would do very well at the Board of Trade; but among them all, where was the commanding figure? to whom were men to look as the pilot to weather the coming storm?

Two other appointments to the Ministry must be noted—that of George Canning to the Cabinet as Foreign Secretary, and that of Sir Arthur Wellesley as Irish Secretary, with many years' work of another kind between him and admission to that charmed circle. Canning, as we have seen, had already held subordinate office under Pitt, and was known as a power in debate; but his unsparing wit and irreverent pen had made him more enemies than he could reckon friends. Even his special patron and confidant, Lord Malmesbury, pronounced him "hardly yet a statesman," adding the curiously accurate forecast that if, upon entering public life, Canning had experienced "some hardships, or even contradictions, his mind would have taken a better bend; but, spoiled as he has been—feared and wanted as he finds himself—no place is now high enough for him; his ambition rises beyond this visible diurnal sphere, and I fear he may lose many real and cordial friends for uncertain political connexions."[2] As for Sir Arthur Wellesley, who made no secret of his dislike to the office to which he had been appointed, or to any office which should interfere with his profession as a soldier,[3] he found

George Canning (1770–1827).

[1] Brougham's *Statesmen*, i. 324.

[2] Lord Malmesbury's *Diaries*, ii. 367.

[3] "When I returned to England from India, I determined to have nothing to do with politics, and I was induced to go into Parliament solely by the situation in which my brother [Lord Wellesley] was placed when he returned home." (Letter to the Marquess of Buckingham: Wellington's *Supplementary Despatches*, xiii. 285.)

himself immersed in strange work for the victor of Assaye. Napoleon's conquests had reacted powerfully upon Irish disaffection, wherefore the Irish Secretary had to work hard in securing the Government majority by the lavish administration of patronage, by stuffing the maws of hungry office-seekers, by recommending magnates for what men, unconscious of irony, term "honours," and by purchasing every seat which came into the market. Of one thing Wellesley became convinced by his experience in the Irish Office—namely, that if Napoleon should ever accomplish the conquest of England, the approach must be through the door of Ireland.

Sir Arthur Wellesley.

"I am positively convinced that no political measure which you could adopt would alter the temper of the people of this country. They are disaffected to the British Government; they don't feel the benefits of their situation; attempts to render it better either do not reach their minds, or they are represented to them as additional injuries; and, in fact, we have no strength here but our army." [1]

The strength of the new Government lay in the House of Commons; nevertheless, the constitutional question having been raised whether Ministers should be permitted to take office under pledges not to offer advice to the Crown upon a specific subject of national concern, a vote of censure upon Ministers was rejected by a majority of thirty-two only. The Parliament, therefore, which had been barely six months in existence, was dissolved on 27th April. The elections brought greatly increased strength to Ministers, whose majority in the new Parliament mounted as high as 195 on strictly party lines.

Much, very much—everything, so far as England was concerned—depended upon the quality of the men whom Portland gathered round him. Looking back upon that summer of 1807, one perceives that since the Norman Conquest the freedom of our land has never been in such dire peril. The imminence of invasion, indeed, had passed away, but a vengeance more deadly, because more insidious, was brewing. Pitt's whole scheme of coalition lay in ruin,

[1] Wellington's *Civil Despatches—Ireland*, pp. 28–36.

Austria and Prussia were prostrate; Napoleon's victory at Friedland on 14th June struck with dismay the Emperor Alexander of Russia, who suddenly adopted a most unfriendly tone to the British ambassador, Lord George Leveson Gower, with whom he had an interview at Memel on 17th June. He complained that the British Government had left the whole burden of the war to the Russian armies; that the British expedition to North Germany, repeatedly promised, had never been carried into effect; and, finally, that King George's Government had declined his suggestion for raising a Russian loan in London. In short, wrote Lord George to Canning on that evening, "the language and tone of his Imperial Majesty were to me perfectly unexpected."[1] Soon it was made plain to Gower that this was no transitory mood of the Russian autocrat. The Russian Minister, de Budberg, spoke openly about his master's change of view, and explained it as the consequence of the inactivity of Great Britain. "Jumais sa Majesté Impériale n'auroit songé a s'ecarter du systeme qu'elle a suivi jusqu'ici, si elle eut eté soutenue par une assistance réelle de la part de ses alliés." Not a word about the part England had played in sweeping the French and Spanish fleets from the seas! No reference to the subsidies paid by Great Britain to enable Russia to keep her armies in the field![2] Alexander had made up his mind to secure peace, regardless of the consequences to his ally.

Treaty of Tilsit, 25th June–7th July 1807.

On 25th June took place the memorable meeting of the Emperor Napoleon and the Emperor Alexander "upon a floating bridge on the Niemen near Tilsit."[3]

The conversation is said to have been opened by Alexander saying to Napoleon: "I hate the English as much as you do, and I shall support you in all that you undertake against them."

"In that case," replied Napoleon, "everything may be arranged, and peace is secure."

[1] F.O. *Records*, vol. 192 (Russia).

[2] The latest instalment had been £500,000 paid to M. Alopéus, Russian Minister in London, in March.

[3] Gower to Canning, 25th June. Gower says that the King of Prussia was present also, but he took no part in the first interview.

After Alexander had unburdened himself "en un torrent d'accusations contre l'Angleterre, l'Autriche et la Prusse," Napoleon said:

"We shall arrive more quickly at an understanding if we hold direct intercourse without the intervention of Ministers, who often betray us and do not always understand us. Between ourselves we shall do more business in one hour than our intermediaries [*mandataires*] could get through in several days. . . . Let me be your Secretary, sire, and you will be mine."[1]

Alexander being in the mood to throw in his lot with the conqueror of Europe, it required no expert in psychology to foresee the result of a conference between two such intellects, thus deliberately stripped of the usual official safeguards. Alexander was no fool; but he was no match for Napoleon. Dazzled by the proposal to make the Vistula the western boundary of his empire, he assented eagerly to the heads of a treaty of alliance with France; and, a few days later, accepted almost or entirely without question a further series of secret articles which were read over to him. The King of Prussia joined in the subsequent negotiations, which resulted in the conclusion of the famous treaty of Tilsit on 7th July. This consisted of three parts; the first, containing twenty-nine articles, was a simple treaty of peace between Russia and France. The second part consisted of seven secret articles disposing of certain territories and kingships, which, deeply as they concerned Great Britain, were of light moment compared to nine other secret articles contained in the third part of the treaty. These bound the Emperors of Russia and France to make common cause and to wage war against the enemy of either of them. Alexander was to offer mediation between Great Britain and France; should it be declined, then Sweden, Denmark, and Portugal were to be called upon to close their ports to English shipping, to recall their ambassadors from London, and to declare war against Great Britain. Prussia, under the same agreement, was cut down to the grade of a third or fourth rate Power, her army reduced to 50,000, and her share of Poland disgorged in favour of Russia.

[1] De Martens, xiii. 300, quoting Hardenberg, *Denkwürdigkeiten*, ii. 490.

Canning had been but three months at the head of the Foreign Office when this transaction came to his knowledge and he was called upon to act. Act he did, with a swift vigour which has contributed more to his renown as a Minister than all his wit, his eloquence, or his later influence upon European politics. Had he hesitated Great Britain was lost, for the old Northern Confederacy was to be revived, without a ray of hope from the action of Austria. The means by which Canning obtained his information have remained an attractive mystery to this day. Pressed afterwards by the Opposition in Parliament to reveal the source and nature of the intelligence upon which the Cabinet acted, he declined to explain either. Not only were the terms of the principal treaty withheld from Leveson Gower, despite his remonstrance against "the unseemly exclusion of the British ambassador from any communication with the Russian Ministry,"[1] but the existence of any secret clauses was denied by de Budberg. In vain did George III. write a private letter of amity to Alexander, "which, but for the infirmity of my sight, I would have written with my own hand";[2] no communication of the terms of the treaty, whether open or secret, was ever vouchsafed to the British Government.

Nevertheless, Canning heard enough to convince him that a dangerous plot was on the brink of execution. The evidence was not complete, nor such as could be laid before Parliament; but Canning's genius leapt the gap of broken links and resumed the chain. On 16th July he had sent Mr. Brooke Taylor, a man thoroughly in his confidence, to replace Mr. Garlike as Minister at Copenhagen, and instructed him to obtain assurance from the Danish Government that they would reject any proposal from Napoleon to form a maritime league against Great Britain.[3]

Now Denmark was one of the few European States which, save for the stormy episode of 1801, had managed to preserve neutrality. English mails for the Continent continued to be landed at the Danish port of Tonningen,

[1] Canning to Leveson Gower, 21st July.
[2] *Foreign Office Records.* [3] Ibid.

which was clean contrary to Napoleon's continental system. "Let that little Prince[1] take care of himself!" he growled, and Denmark became diplomatically polite to her colossal neighbour.

The only two points of vantage held by Great Britain consisted in her navy, which kept the French fleets, or so much of them as her captains had not sunk or captured, shut up in port, and her wealth, derived from her commerce. The first would be in jeopardy should Napoleon, in addition to the Russian and Swedish fleets, also obtain control of the Danish, which was in excellent order; the second would be forfeited were all European ports closed against the British flag. Canning was resolved to preserve both. Swiftly, and with astonishing secrecy, a fleet of twenty-seven sail of the line and many transports was assembled at Sheerness and the Nore towards the end of July, in which 27,000 troops under command of Lord Cathcart embarked with sealed orders. The British public, long accustomed to the movement of troops and the sailing of fleets, had no inkling of the object of the expedition; and when the fleet anchored off Copenhagen on 4th August, the Danes were interested, of course, but not the least alarmed, having no reason to apprehend anything unfriendly from the British flag. The Crown Prince was absent from the capital, but returning on 12th August, received from Lord Cathcart a summons in the name of King George for the delivery of the entire Danish fleet and naval equipment, to be held by Great Britain until peace should be restored in Europe, when they should be restored to their rightful owners. The Prince rejected the ultimatum with a spirit as high as in 1801, and with similar sorrowful result to his capital. Cathcart disembarked at Veldbeck, and while he was building up batteries for the bombardment of Copenhagen, Sir Arthur Wellesley routed the Danish General Castenskiold at Roskilde. Wellesley tried to dissuade his chief from bombarding the capital, proposing instead to occupy the island of Amager, and so, by cutting off all supplies, force the

Expedition to Copenhagen, Aug. 1807.

[1] The Crown Prince Frederic, Regent since 1784 on account of his father's insanity.

Danes to capitulate.[1] But Cathcart had instructions from home to make short work of the affair. The bombardment began on the evening of 2nd September; the city capitulated on the 5th, and the brave Danes had to submit to the confiscation of their fleet and an immense quantity of naval stores.[2]

Bombardment of Copenhagen, 2nd-5th Sept. 1807.

While this inglorious but necessary conquest was getting done, and well done, other operations were being not well done against Constantinople, Alexandria, and Buenos Ayres. The last mentioned was a lamentable affair—lamentable in conception, for it was part of the old scheme, so conspicuous in Pitt's war policy, of detached and distant expeditions—lamentable in execution, being the most discreditable passage of arms in British annals of the nineteenth century.

Pitt had countenanced, though he had not explicitly authorised, an expedition fitted out from the Cape of Good Hope, under Commodore Sir Home Popham and General Beresford, against the Spanish colony of Buenos Ayres. That city was captured, but the British garrison, not being properly supported by the fleet, was forced to surrender. Popham was tried by court-martial, and found guilty of "conduct highly reprehensible in a British officer and leading to a subversion of all military discipline." In the spring of 1807 reinforcements were sent out, making up the total of British troops in La Plata to about 11,500 of all arms, and General Whitelocke was put in command, with instructions to subdue the whole province of Buenos Ayres. He sacrificed his army in an ill-designed attempt to carry Buenos Ayres by assault, in which he lost 2500 men, and was forced to accept humiliating terms from the Spanish commander and to evacuate the province. For all this he was afterwards tried and cashiered. Such, in brief outline, was the outcome of a system which secured the appointment of any noodle who happened to have interest at Court or the Horse Guards, over officers of capacity such as

Whitelocke's disaster in Buenos Ayres, 1807.

[1] Wellington's *Supplementary Despatches*, vi. 9, 16.

[2] The fleet consisted of 18 sail of the line, 15 frigates, and 31 brigs and gunboats.

Beresford, Craufurd, and Auchmuty (Whitelocke's brigadiers). The only satisfactory points about this wretched concern were, first, that it was the last occasion when Britons fought their ancient foes, the Spaniards; and second, that it cured Canning for ever of any inclination he might have had to undertakings against remote communities. "If it were not for the loss with which the event has been attended," he wrote, "I am not quite sure that I should regret the evacuation."[1]

[1] *George Canning and his Times*, p. 128.

CHAPTER V

Treaty between Great Britain and Sweden—Sir John Moore's expedition to Sweden—The affairs of Portugal—Treaty of Fontainebleau—The French invade Portugal—Flight of the Portuguese Court—The affair of the Escurial—Napoleon's designs upon Spain—Revolution in Aranjuez and Madrid—First expedition to the Peninsula—Line against column—Wellesley disembarks in the Mondego—First encounter with the French at Roliça—Wellesley superseded by Burrard—Battle of Vimeiro—Burrard superseded by Dalrymple—Convention of Cintra—General indignation: Court of Inquiry—Quarrel of Castlereagh and Canning—Conference of the Emperors at Erfurth—Letter of the two Emperors to George III.—Canning's reply—Campaign of Sir John Moore—Moore decides upon retreat—The advance resumed—Retreat resumed—Battle of Coruña and death of Moore—Treaty between Great Britain and Spain.

THE European situation after the bombardment of Copenhagen was very remarkable. The defection of Russia had closed the Continent as a field of action for British armies; Canning's vigilance and prompt courage had blighted Napoleon's dream of an effective naval force; the combatants remained under arms, but there was no common battle-ground whereon their issue might be determined. England remained supreme at sea, her enemies invulnerable by land; only in Sweden was there still foothold for British troops, and on 8th February 1808 a convention was concluded between George III. and Gustavus IV., whereby the British Government was bound to pay an annual subsidy of £1,200,030 so long as Gustavus employed his army and navy "in the most effectual resistance to the common enemies." In this purpose Gustavus was hearty enough, for his whole policy was regulated by the conviction that Napoleon was the Great Beast of the Apocalypse. Unluckily he was crazy, insisting upon schemes which it was impossible for his allies to support. In May Sir John Moore was sent out with 10,000 troops to assist in defending Sweden against invasion by Russia and Denmark. He found Gustavus bent upon offensive operations in

Treaty between Great Britain and Sweden, 8th Feb. 1808.

Finland and Denmark; and when Moore declined to employ his corps in such service, which was beyond the limit of his instructions, angry altercation arose, ending in the King ordering the British general under arrest. Colonel Murray,[1] fully alive to the delicacy of the situation, counselled Moore to take it quietly.

Sir John Moore's expedition to Sweden, May 1808.

"Murray," writes Moore in his diary, "wishes that all should be hushed up, and, each party retracting, that things should return to the situation in which they were on the day I took my leave of his Swedish Majesty. This would perhaps be agreeable to Ministers in England, who may not wish to quarrel with Sweden, but in my opinion matters have been carried too far. My arrest is now public, and should be atoned for; and as to quarrelling with Sweden, it is more her interest than that of England to keep on amicable terms. The King should be made to acknowledge his error, and I think it is pretty plain that the insolence which insulted will have the meanness, if properly addressed, to submit."[1]

Moore therefore took the law into his own hands; broke his arrest, escaped in disguise from Stockholm to Gothenberg, rejoined the fleet, and sailed back to England with his army. It is not surprising that Canning's confidence was shaken in a general who thought what might be "agreeable to Ministers in England" matter of secondary importance to an affront put upon himself by a royal lunatic.

Napoleon, baffled by Canning's prompt action in his design of ruining British commerce in the Baltic, now turned his attention to the only other seaboard in Europe still open to the flag of England. Under threat of war, he demanded of the Court of Lisbon not only that the harbours of Portugal should be closed against British merchandise in accordance with his continental system, but that all the British in Portugal should be arrested and all British property confiscated. Queen Maria of Portugal being hopelessly insane, the government at this time was in the regency of Prince John (afterwards John VI.), who perhaps displayed as much ability in this sudden

The affairs of Portugal, 1807–8.

[1] Afterwards General Sir George Murray, so well known as Wellington's Quartermaster-General throughout the Peninsular War.

[2] Sir John Moore's *Diary*, ii. 228.

dilemma as could be expected from the offspring of an unnatural parentage.[1] Portugal's powerful neighbour, Spain, being in alliance with France and wholly under French control, what chance had the Regent of withstanding the terrible Emperor's will? Yet to comply would be to offend Great Britain, for there were many British merchants in Lisbon, and trade throve mightily upon the insatiable British thirst for port.[2] So there was this little realm like to be ground out of existence as Denmark had been.[3] The British Cabinet was forbearing. Lord Strangford, ambassador at Lisbon, informed the Regent that in the peculiar circumstances the closure of Portuguese ports would not be viewed as unfriendly, but that any interference with the liberty or property of British subjects must be met as an act of war. Prince John did his best to please both parties, temporising and procrastinating with Napoleon so as to give the British residents time to remove their persons and property. On 8th November he signed an order for the seizure of the few British subjects and goods remaining within his dominions. Lord Strangford immediately withdrew on board the flagship of Sir Sidney Smith, the hero of Acre, whose squadron promptly blockaded the Tagus. Portugal was added to the long list of England's active enemies. It was a question whether her fleet should not be seized as the Danish one had been, but Canning wisely held his hand. Not so Napoleon, who had described himself to Talleyrand as "the heir, not of Louis XIV., but of Charlemagne."[4] Powers hesitating to fulfil the bidding of Napoleon must be destroyed or reduced to vassalage. Already, on 27th October, there had been signed at Paris a treaty between the representatives of France and Spain, providing for the dethronement of the House of Braganza and the dismemberment of its dominions, the admission of French troops to Spain and the employment of

Treaty of Fontainebleau, 27th Oct. 1807.

[1] Queen Maria had married her own uncle, Pedro III., under papal dispensation.

[2] By the Methuen treaty (annulled in 1835) Portuguese wines were admitted to England at one-third less duty than French wines.

[3] In the sixteenth century Portugal was one of the greatest colonial powers. At the beginning of the nineteenth century she still retained the vast territory of Brazil, extending to upwards of 3,000,000 square miles.

[4] May 16, 1806.

Spanish troops by France for the conquest of Portugal. The Regent warned Napoleon that the moment his frontiers should be violated, he would remove the seat of his government across the Atlantic to the Portuguese dominion of Brazil. Nothing could have fitted in more neatly with Napoleon's design. The seaboard of Portugal was his only concern; possessed of that, he could fill the vacant throne with some member of his own family, as he had already filled the thrones of Naples and Holland. General Junot, with 25,000 French troops and as many Spanish auxiliaries, crossed the Portuguese frontier in November and occupied Lisbon without having to fire a shot.

French invasion of Portugal, Nov. 1807.

Had only moderate resistance been offered to the invaders in any of the countless defiles on the frontier, Junot's army must have been destroyed, for so great were the hardships of this winter march that he entered the capital with no more than 1500 starving infantry. But not an arm was raised by this once warlike people for the defence of their country; the mere name of Napoleon struck the nation like a palsy. Struck their rulers, that is; for upon them be the shame. Lord Strangford, returning to Lisbon on 27th November, found the Regent in the act of escaping to his ships, carrying with him his lunatic mother and a crowd of courtiers, while the wealthy inhabitants of Lisbon were collecting their valuables and crowding on board a convoy of merchantmen, scared out of all remnant of dignity and decency by the mere rattle of Junot's drums. Next morning, when the ignoble expedition set sail, Sir Sidney's guns thundered out a royal salute, and four British ships of the line were told off as an escort *of honour* to accompany the runaway court to Rio de Janeiro.

On 29th November Junot's advanced guard took possession of Lisbon, and after the other brigades had arrived the general set to work disbanding the Portuguese army, sending 6000 or 7000 of the best soldiers as a present to his Emperor.[1] Next he imposed a fine of 100,000,000 francs upon the

Flight of the Portuguese Court, 29th Nov. 1807.

[1] These were stationed on the Baltic. In 1812 the survivors of them were formed into three regiments, whereof nearly every man perished in the retreat from Moscow.

inhabitants. Nearly all who could afford to do so had fled; the money could not be raised; those who resisted confiscation of their movables were shot as rebels.

The fall of Portugal, England's last open market on the Continent, must have appeared at the time an unmitigated calamity; it came, in truth, as a blessing in disguise. It marked a fresh departure in British strategy, forcing Ministers to concentrate their forces upon a single point in the field of war, instead of dissipating them in desultory, barren expeditions to every quarter of the globe. Henceforth, with one deplorable exception—the expedition to the Scheldt—"the policy of filching sugar islands," as Sheridan termed it, should be attempted no more. Yet might Portugal have been wiped from the map of Europe without this salutary lesson being driven home, but for a violent upheaval in Spain against French aggression,

Charles IV., aged and more than half-dotard, was entirely under the sway of his Minister, Manuel de Godoy, a man of good lineage, but owing his redemption from financial ruin solely to his handsome person, which had found him favour in the eyes of Queen Maria Lusia. For sixteen years he had been paramount in the State, having received the title of Principe de la Paz—*Prince of the Peace*—in reward for negotiating the treaty of Basle (1795). During these years he had reared against himself the hatred of every class in the country, not by reason of tyrannical rule—for, though boundlessly ambitious, he was of a mild disposition—but because of the shameless corruption whereby he had enriched himself,[1] and because of his truckling to Napoleon.

The affair of the Escurial, 27th Oct.–5th Nov. 1807.

Spain had sunk low indeed under this man's administration. Once empress of the ocean and mistress of half the world, her navies either had been destroyed or were cooped up to rot in her harbours; her commerce was ruined, communication with her colonies cut off; the flower of her army had been drawn off to fight Napoleon's battles in Germany. But the ancient spirit still burned in her people.

[1] Foy states that Godoy delayed for three days the publication of the peace of 1802, in order that he might derive full advantage from the rise in the price of stocks.

A strong patriotic party, discerning French influence at the root of all their evils, bitterly resenting the presence of French armies on Spanish soil, turned to the heir-apparent, Frederick, Prince of the Asturias, as their natural champion. Alas! the age of puissant princes seemed to be clean passed away. Centuries of flattery and inflated privilege had rotted all kingliness out of the royal race. Ferdinand, indeed, had a wholesome hatred for his mother's paramour; feared him, too, as having designs upon the dynasty through French influence;[1] but instead of acting a manly part and rallying the nation to himself, he sought to checkmate Godoy by writing a cringing letter to Napoleon as "the hero sent by Providence to strengthen tottering thrones, and to give to the nations peace and felicity," begging for some lady of the imperial house in marriage.

Of this move Godoy was duly informed, either by Napoleon's agents or by his own spies; and on the very day that the treaty of Fontainebleau was signed, Ferdinand was seized and imprisoned on a charge of high treason.

In all the marvellous Napoleonic chronicle there is no darker chapter than that which screens the growth of the Emperor's designs upon the Spanish monarchy. M. Thiers claimed to be the only historian who had perused the documents containing their clue,[2] a perusal which brought him to the hesitating conclusion that the subjugation of the whole Peninsula first occurred to Napoleon upon the arrest of the Prince of the Asturias. But besides his general grudge against the Bourbons, the Emperor had a particular score standing against Godoy, whose proclamation to the Spanish nation, dated 5th October 1806, he had received on the very field of Jena. "Je jurai des lors," he is reported to have said, "qu'ils me la paieraient, que je les mettrais hors d'état de me nuire." Godoy's proclamation was evidently issued in the expectation that France was

Napoleon's designs upon Spain, 1808.

[1] One of the articles of the treaty of Fontainebleau provided for Godoy receiving the independent principality of Algarves.

[2] "Je suis le seul historien qui les ait possédés tous. . . . Tous les autres ont composé des œuvres avec d'autres livres" (*Hist. du Consulat*, &c., viii. 659).

about to fall before Russia and Prussia. The domestic feuds of the Spanish Court opened an easy avenue to vengeance and, at the same time, to the overturn of the last Bourbon throne in Europe. The treaty of Fontainebleau gave the French armies peaceful admission into Spain; but Napoleon showed no signs of withdrawing them once their ostensible object, the conquest of Portugal, had been accomplished. On the contrary, not only Portugal, but the chief strategic posts in Spain were occupied successively by fresh columns, sent forward under pretext of supporting General Junot.[1] Returning to Paris from Milan in January 1808, Napoleon matured his plans, chief of which seems to have been to frighten King Charles to follow the Portuguese Court in its flight across the Atlantic.

The imprisonment of the popular Prince of the Asturias brought about such a ferment in Madrid that the King was forced into issuing a windy proclamation of pardon and ordering his release. Napoleon continued to correspond most amicably both with the King and the Prince, discussing the projected marriage; but all the while the toils were closing round the doomed monarchy; all the while the Emperor's instructions to Murat continued incessant and and in the same key—"Continuez à tenir de bon propos. Rassurez le roi, le prince de la Paix, la reine."

Revolution in Aranjuez and Madrid, 17th, 18th March 1808.

At last the *bon propos* ceased to delude even Godoy. Recognising in himself the Emperor's cat's-paw, on the point of being cast aside, he made secret preparations for the instant flight of the Court to America. But the humiliating secret leaked out. Prince Ferdinand, with unwonted spirit, denounced the author of this craven counsel, and called upon the people to prevent it. They rose in arms, seized

[1] The occupation proceeded peacefully, but Murat had instructions to use force if necessary. General Darmagnac was superseded because he had taken possession only of the town of Pampluna, not the citadel. On 20th February 1808, Napoleon wrote to Murat: "Your communications with the Spanish commanders should be friendly. You need offer no explanation for occupying the fortresses except the necessity for securing our communications. If the Governor-General of Navarre should refuse to surrender the citadel of Pampluna, you can employ the troops of Marshal Moncey to force him." In effect, the citadel was seized by stratagem, the French soldiers having engaged in a snowballing match with the garrison.

Godoy and nearly killed him, forced the King to abdicate, and proclaimed Ferdinand VII. in his room.

Murat took possession of Madrid on 23rd March, where he established military law. Napoleon, still posing in secret as the friend of both parties, came to Bayonne. Encouraged by the Emperor, Charles IV. revoked his abdication, and hastened, with the Queen and Godoy, to meet his treacherous ally at Bayonne. Thither also came Ferdinand VII. to make final arrangements for his marriage. Masks off! The trap was full. On 5th May the old king, on the 6th the new one, made unconditional surrender of the throne of Spain to their "friend and ally" the Emperor of the French. On 2nd May a tumult arose in Madrid, to be repressed with merciless severity by Murat; but in all the provinces the people were arming; evidently the subjugation of Spain was to prove a very different task to that of Portugal.

The Spanish rising, 1808.

These events had momentous consequences in England. It has been told of Pitt that, not long before his death, he laid finger on the map of Spain, declaring that there, if anywhere, might the torrent of French conquest be stayed. The story lacks confirmation; but, be it well or ill founded, the earliest documentary proof of that design which, audaciously conceived, resolutely undertaken, and carried through with splendid tenacity, was to liberate the nations of Europe, is in the handwriting of another than Pitt. From the autumn of 1806 continuously until the spring of 1808, the British Cabinet, pursuing its old policy of pin-pricks, had been deliberating how the revolutionary party in the Spanish colonies of South America might be assisted in rebellion against the King of Spain. One General Miranda came to England as agent of the revolutionaries, and urged the Government to send an expedition to their assistance. This was just the kind of hare-brained enterprise to which King George's Ministers had shown themselves too prone; but on this occasion they appointed one to negotiate with Miranda who had scant sympathy with such strategy. "I always had a horror," said Sir Arthur Wellesley in after years to Lord Mahon, "of revolutionising any country for a political object. I always said—if they rise of themselves, well and good, but

do not stir them up; it is a frightful responsibility."[1] Nevertheless, Wellesley's masters being bent on the expedition, he drew up a long series of memoranda, specifying how and where the forces should be employed, and how they were to be armed, clothed, and fed. In May 1808 9000 troops lay at Cork ready to embark so soon as a general should be appointed to command them. It was desired, if possible, to avoid sending out another Whitelocke, and doubtless the choice would have fallen upon Wellesley himself. But, before the appointment could be made, came tidings that the Spaniards were in arms against the French. What folly, then, to persist in stirring rebellion in South America against a monarchy which had ceased to exist! The last of Wellesley's memoranda on the South American expedition directed attention to a different field for operation. He recommended that all the troops which could be spared from England should be sent to Spain, pointing out that the manner in which Napoleon's armies were spread in all parts of Europe offered "an opportunity which ought not to be passed by."[2]

The Spanish rising was no flash in the pan; it was spreading like a forest fire. Only greedy grandees and hungry courtiers bent the knee to the new king, Joseph Bonaparte; nationalist juntas were formed in nearly every province, and delegates from the north of Spain arrived in England to implore aid in the shape of money and arms. British hearts have never been insensible to the cause of freedom; the delegates received a cordial welcome; for one brief and rare interval Whig and Tory laid aside their wrangles; Canning and Sheridan vied in the warmth of their encouragement to the patriots and their determination to support their cause. Liberal subsidies and munitions of war were shipped off to Spain; Sir Arthur Wellesley, still retaining his post as Irish Secretary, was appointed to command the division assembled at Cork and to conduct it to the Peninsula, there to co-operate with whatever Spanish force he might find in the field against the French.

It is impossible not to admire the indomitable perse-

[1] Earl Stanhope's *Conversations with the Duke of Wellington*, p. 69.
[2] Wellington's *Supplementary Despatches*, vi. 80, 82.

verance of Ministers in venturing upon yet another expedition, undaunted by the fate of so many previous ones. Well might its commander reflect gravely upon his slender resources. He was to take out 8123 of all arms, including 394 cavalry, whereof only 184 were mounted; he was to pick up Spencer's corps of 4503, with no cavalry, from Andalusia, making, with 45 men of the staff corps, a total of 13,536 men, wherewith to encounter the scarcely calculable numbers which Napoleon could put in the field, commanded by the most famous generals in the world. Truly, it seemed a courting of disaster; the only bright feature in the prospect being the accounts received of the strength and spirit of the Spanish patriot levies. Wellesley committed the care of Irish parliamentary business during his absence to John Wilson Croker. On 14th June, the night before he sailed, he dined with his deputy to discuss with him some Dublin Pipe Water Bill. When that was settled—

First Peninsular expedition, 12th July 1808.

"He seemed," wrote Croker upon the same evening, "to lapse into a kind of reverie, and remained silent so long that I asked him what he was thinking of. He replied: 'Why, to say the truth, I am thinking of the French I am going to fight. I have not seen them since the campaign in Flanders, when they were capital soldiers, and a dozen of years of victory under Buonaparte must have made them better still. They have, besides, it seems, a new system of strategy,[1] which has outmanœuvred all the armies of Europe. 'Tis enough to make one thoughtful, but no matter; my die is cast; they may overwhelm me, but I don't think they'll outmanœuvre me. First, because I am not afraid of them, as everybody else seems to be; and secondly, because if what I hear of their system of manœuvres be true, I think it a false one against steady troops. I suspect all the continental armies were more than half-beaten before the battle was begun. I, at least, will not be frightened beforehand.'"[2]

Albeit this is in no sense a military history, the movements of troops in the field being indicated only to an extent that may enable the reader to understand the position and action of Great Britain in relation to foreign Powers, yet the fruit of Wellesley's meditation had such momentous consequences

Line against column.

[1] Wellesley probably spoke of tactics, not strategy.
[2] *The Croker Papers*, i. 12, 13.

upon the campaign whereon his country was about to enter—the greatest to which she has ever been committed —that a few lines may be devoted to considering the point in tactics round which his thoughts revolved.

The French system of field tactics was a modification of the Prussian method of the great Frederick. Its main feature was the attack in massive column, masked by a cloud of skirmishers; its chief merit, the combined moral and physical effect of a solid mass of infantry upon troops already shaken by artillery and riddled by the fire of skirmishers. The French attack had prevailed against the armies of every nation which attempted to meet column with column; and every nation did so until the year 1806. On the field of Maida, for the first time in Europe (it had been practised before that on Indian battlefields), was seen the remarkable effect of infantry deployed in line of two ranks receiving the attack of infantry in column. A battalion of ten companies thus deployed has a front, whether for firing or charging with the bayonet, ten times greater than a battalion of ten companies in column—five times the front of one in column of double companies. It is true that the regular French company was stronger than the British; there were usually only six companies in a French battalion; but the British company formation was in two ranks only, whereas the French soldiers stood three deep. Thus the British battalion of 800 rank and file deployed had a firing and bayonet front 800 strong; both ranks being in a position to fire and use the bayonet; whereas the actual front of a French column of six companies 1000 strong consisted only of 50 men, its firing and bayonet front being 100 men. Such a column, advancing against the same number of infantry in line, was enveloped on front and flanks, and, moreover, offered a far easier target than the same number of men deployed. The question, of course, remained whether any infantry could be relied on to await in line two deep the approach of the best European troops in solid formation; still more, whether they could be trusted to deliver the counter-attack without falling into confusion. Wellesley believed they could, and he carried his belief to triumphant demonstration.

The expedition sailed from Cork on 12th July. Arriving at Coruña on the 20th, Wellesley found the Junta of Galicia overflowing with patriotism and confidence, notwithstanding that their army of 22,000 under Cuesta and Blake had been thoroughly beaten at Rio Seco on the 14th by Marshal Bessières with a force of about 14,000. They were ready enough to accept £200,000 in English gold, besides arms and military stores; but their national pride and hereditary hatred of the Rubios[1] frustrated all the British general's plans of joint action in the field. They recommended him to employ his troops in Portugal, promising to send a division to support him at Oporto, where the Portuguese had risen in belated revolt. Wellesley had yet to learn the real value of Spanish promises. Meanwhile, he was not sorry to avail himself of the superior strategic advantages of Portugal—"the basis," as he afterwards described it, "on which the machinery was founded which finally overthrew the world."[2]

At first it seemed as if the Spanish Juntas had not overrated their strength when they bowed off their would-be allies. The French were not prepared for the extent and fury of the national movement; the calamity of Rio Seco was balanced by Spanish successes at Cadiz, Zaragoza, Valencia and elsewhere, culminating in the surrender of 18,000 troops under General Dupont to Castaños at Baylen on 18th July, and the precipitate flight of the newly crowned King Joseph from Madrid. General Spencer, who had landed 5000 troops from Gibraltar at Cadiz, where the insurgents were supreme, re-embarked in obedience to a summons from Wellesley to come to his support. The British field force disembarked in Mondego Bay in the first week of August, Spencer's reinforcement bringing the numbers up to 14,200 of all arms. They had no means of transport, save what could be obtained in the country, and but a single squadron of cavalry; but the Portuguese were friendly, and, following the spirited example of their Spanish neighbours, were busily arming and drilling. Reinforce-

[1] The Spaniards nicknamed our soldiers *Rubios* from their red uniform, an ambiguous compliment, seeing that Rubio is also their name for Judas Iscariot.

[2] Raikes's *Correspondence*, p. 62.

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ments were on the way from England. Sir John Moore, returning from his abortive expedition to Sweden, received orders to keep his troops on board and proceed with them to Portugal, which, with the brigades of Anstruther and Acland already on the voyage thither, would bring up the total strength of the expedition to 30,000. Moore would have superseded Wellesley in the chief command; but there were reasons other than military which induced Canning to offer the strongest objection to committing the conduct of the campaign to Moore. Napier has explained these reasons as springing from party prejudice, but Napier's hatred of the Tories often warped his view of facts. Moore was no Whig, but sat in Parliament as a follower of Pitt from 1784 to 1790. A later writer has declared that Canning's motive was "the gratification of personal spleen."[1] A more groundless accusation never was made. Canning had faults—of temper and otherwise—but he never stooped to spite. The truth is simply that he did not consider Moore fitted for the conduct of a campaign in the Peninsula, where wise and tactful relations with sensitive and suspicious local Juntas were as necessary to success as military operations. Repeatedly had Moore proved himself incapable of working harmoniously with civilian officials of his own nation. In Majorca he had been recalled from his command as the result of a quarrel with the Viceroy, Sir Gilbert Elliot; at Naples he had fallen out with the British Minister, Mr. Drummond; and in his mission to Sweden there was reason to believe that an officer of a more patient temper would have avoided the serious embroilment with the King of Sweden. In the words of his panegyrist, Napier, Moore "maintained the right" (or what he considered to be the right) "with vehemence bordering upon fierceness."

Canning and Sir John Moore.

Moreover, in undertaking a contest in the Peninsula, any force which the British Government could employ was so inferior in numbers and, let us confess it, in prestige to the French, that it was of main importance to commit it to a general of confident spirit. Great as Moore's military talent undoubtedly was, it was his tendency to dwell de-

[1] *Diary of Sir John Moore*, edited by General Sir F. Maurice, ii. 248.

spondently upon difficulties. Unlike Nelson and Wellington, he did nothing to stiffen the resolution and brace the nerves of his employers; on the contrary, they drew from him nothing but discouragement. Moore knew, no one better, what the British army might and ought to be; taken as it was, he distrusted its capacity for any serious undertaking. Hence, on this occasion, after receiving his final instructions from Castlereagh before sailing for the Peninsula and having taken leave, he returned to the room and said to the Minister: "Remember, my lord, I protest against the expedition, and foretell its failure."[1]

Are Ministers to be blamed if they sought for a commander-in-chief less inclined to misgiving than this fine soldier? Castlereagh, probably Canning also, would have committed the whole expedition to Wellesley; but Wellesley was only nine-and-thirty; the Horse Guards declined to sanction the appointment of the junior lieutenant-general in the service to such an extensive command; wherefore Sir Hew Dalrymple, Governor of Gibraltar, was appointed commander-in-chief, with Sir Harry Burrard as second in command—both officers being much senior to Moore and Wellesley.

Great bodies—some of them at least—move slowly. The campaign was virtually at an end before Dalrymple reached the seat of war. Wellesley had been allowed to set out in full assurance that the campaign had been entrusted to him. He was on the point of disembarking his troops in Mondego Bay when a despatch informed him that he had been superseded. A sharp trial he must have felt it, conscious as he could not but be of superiority in experience of war to those set over him. Wellesley was proud, sensitive, quick-tempered; but he had a perfect sense of discipline and subordination. He wrote to Castlereagh in terms that should be inscribed in golden letters in every mess-room of the British army:—

"Pole and Burghersh have apprized me of the arrangements for the future command of this army; and the former has informed

[1] *George Canning and his Times*, p. 159. Sir F. Maurice explains this remarkable utterance as arising solely from Moore's distrust of the military capacity of Dalrymple and Burrard (*Diary*, ii. 248–250), but the words most naturally bear a wider significance.

me of your kindness towards me, of which I have experienced so many instances, that I can never doubt it in any case. All that I can say upon that subject is, that whether I am to command this army or not, or am to quit it, I shall do my best to insure its success; and you may depend upon it that I shall not hurry the operations, or commence them one moment sooner than they ought to be commenced, in order that I may acquire the credit of success."[1]

Pending the arrival of his superiors, Wellesley went forward quietly with the work of the campaign. Junot had made a clean sweep of the Portuguese arsenals and armouries; the Supreme Junta of Oporto had been able to equip no more than 5000 infantry and 300 cavalry; but their generalissimo, Dom Bernardim Freire, was as jealous of his dignity as he was ignorant of his profession. He had a plan of campaign of his own, which Wellesley, finding it impracticable, left him to carry out by himself, while he marched along the coast southwards, supported by Sir Charles Cotton's fleet on his right flank. On 15th August advanced parties felt the enemy, an affair of outposts; and on the 17th Wellesley attacked General Delaborde, who, with a corps of observation about 5000 men, was strongly posted at Roliça. The French defended themselves stubbornly against superior numbers, and lost three guns, but, being admirably handled when forced to retire, made good their escape, owing to Wellesley's want of cavalry. The British loss amounted to about 479 killed, wounded, and missing.

Wellesley lands in Mondego Bay, 30th July 1808.

First encounter with the French at Roliça, 17th Aug. 1808.

In high spirits at the result of their first brush with so redoubtable an enemy, the British army continued its advance, being reinforced on 20th August by the brigades of Anstruther and Acland—4000 fresh troops. Wellesley, hearing that Junot had left Lisbon to take command of the French field-force, gave orders for an advance at daybreak on the 21st. But on the night of the 20th arrived Sir Harry Burrard, to whom, as his senior, Wellesley resigned the command. Burrard remained on board ship, but forbade

Wellesley superseded by Burrard, 20th Aug. 1808.

[1] Wellington's *Despatches*, iv. 43.

the advance until the arrival of Sir John Moore's division, which was off the coast.

Now, Wellesley had left urgent advice for Sir John that he should disembark in Mondego Bay, and advance through the interior by way of Santarem—the route preferred by Dom Bernardim Freire. Accordingly, Moore had disembarked, but Burrard, considering the plan too venturesome, ordered him to re-embark and bring his corps to join the main body.

"You will readily believe," wrote Wellesley to Castlereagh, "that the determination is not in conformity with my opinion; and I only wish Sir Harry had landed and seen things with his own eyes before he made it."[1]

Chafing inwardly at what he felt to be a lost opportunity, Wellesley cancelled his orders; but fortune repaired the mischief and rewarded the more intrepid commander. Junot, Duc d'Abrantes, left Lisbon on 15th August to meet Wellesley's advance. He should have been stronger; but, just as Wellesley underrated by 10,000 the strength of the French in Portugal, so Junot reckoned the British at too low a figure, not knowing that they had been reinforced. Besides, he had yet to learn the quality of the general opposed to him. Early on the morning of the 21st he attacked the British position with 14,000 troops. For the first time the French massive column of attack was received in Wellesley's favourite formation—"the thin red line." At noon Sir Harry Burrard arrived on the field to find the enemy already beaten. Junot had been forced to open the road to Lisbon; Solignac, severely wounded and overpowered by the British left wing, was on the point of surrendering; the British right was some miles nearer Lisbon than the French centre. Burrard, dull of perception, not heeding that Junot's line was shattered and his left flank turned, satisfied only that the attack had been repulsed, ordered that all offensive movements should cease. He was deaf to Wellesley's eager remonstrance; nothing should be risked; the enemy was allowed to draw off unmolested, leaving thirteen guns and several hundred prisoners behind him.

Battle of Vimeiro, 21st Aug. 1808.

[1] Wellington's *Despatches*, iv. 92.

How just had been Wellesley's discernment, how ill-timed his senior's caution, was proved next day, after Burrard in his turn had been superseded in command by the arrival of Sir Hew Dalrymple. Junot, notwithstanding the presence of a Russian fleet in the Tagus, feared a rising against him in Lisbon, where the populace was wildly excited by the advance of the British. He sent General Kellermann to negotiate an armistice, on the basis of the immediate evacuation of Portugal by the French. Both Dalrymple and Burrard had been instructed by Castlereagh to consult Wellesley as to the operations they should undertake—instructions not very palatable, one may conceive, to these old soldiers. Wellesley, on his part, would have been more than human had he not felt sore at the thwarting of his design at the last moment and the miscarriage of a brilliant feat of arms. Little of cordiality, therefore, and less of mutual confidence, in the conference to which Wellesley was summoned by his seniors. The armistice was agreed upon between the three British generals and the Frenchman; next, preliminaries were drawn for a convention between Dalrymple, as representing King George, and Junot on the part of France. So far as these preliminaries referred only to these two Powers, the parties were on plain ground; but it was otherwise when the Spanish and Portuguese governments were pledged to surrender all French prisoners without exchange, and the French were authorised to carry off all their "property"—the plunder, in short, which they had collected during their occupation. Wellesley disapproved of these conditions, but considered himself bound to comply with his senior officer's ruling;[1] accordingly, when Dalrymple, conceiving it beneath his dignity to set his own signature beside that of Kellermann, who was of inferior rank to himself, called upon Wellesley to sign the preliminaries, that officer did so

Convention of Cintra, 30th Aug. 1808.

[1] "From the first hour that these officers landed, nay, even before they landed, I clearly perceived that I was not in possession of their confidence. . . . This is what I consider to be the great distinction between military and civil inferior situations. If, in a civil office, the inferior differ materially from the superior, he ought to resign; but in military appointments it is the duty of the inferior officer to assist his commander in the mode in which that commander may deem his services most advantageous." (Speech of Sir Arthur Wellesley in the House of Commons.)

without hesitation. On 30th August was ratified the famous treaty, afterwards known, though erroneously, as the Convention of Cintra.[1] Sir Hew Dalrymple having taken possession of Lisbon, Junot embarked his army, to the number of 26,000, in British transports, which conveyed them to Rochelle, according to the terms of the Convention. By a separate agreement, the Russian Admiral Siniavin surrendered all his ships to be held by Great Britain until six months after peace should be concluded, the officers and men to be conveyed home in like manner as the French troops.

Loud was the indignation of the Spanish and Portuguese Juntas when the terms of the Convention became known; and almost as just as it was loud. In England, also, feeling ran very high. Wellesley, returning to his duties at the Irish Office, found both the press and the public clamouring for the punishment of the generals, the fruits of whose victory had gone to fatten the vanquished. Dalrymple and Burrard, recalled from their commands, were summoned, with Wellesley, before a Court of Inquiry, which, by a majority of six to one, approved of the armistice on 22nd August, and by four to three approved of the subsequent Convention, "in the relative situation of the two armies." But although the three generals were thus pronounced to have done nothing deserving trial by court-martial, neither Dalrymple nor Burrard was ever employed again, and the like would assuredly have been Wellesley's lot had Castlereagh and Canning allowed their faith in the young general's talents to waver. The clamour while it lasted was of no common vehemence: the *Times* simply yelled for vengeance upon the three generals; "Where was the pity of our sires for Byng," sang Byron, and the Opposition, of course, took full advantage of it to throw discredit upon Ministers and to humble the Tory Wellesleys.[2] Prejudice and prepossession

General indignation against the Convention.

[1] It was drawn out at Torres Vedras and ratified at Lisbon.

[2] See Cobbett's *Political Register*, vol. xiv. p. 23. In a private letter to Lord Folkestone, Cobbett speaks even more frankly about the finding of the Court. "It is indeed a damned thing that Wellesley should give the lie to the *protesting* statement of his friends. . . . It is evident that *he* was the prime cause—the *only* cause—of all the mischief. . . . Thus do we pay for the arrogance of that damned infernal family [the Wellesleys]." (*Creevey Papers*, i. 89.)

must always be powerful agencies in party government. In Wellesley's case prepossession proved the more faithful pilot, if we take Walter Scott as the spokesman of Tory opinion. Writing shortly after the Court of Inquiry had pronounced its finding:

"Our army is a poor school for genius. I would to God Wellesley were now at the head of the English in Spain. His late examination shows his acute and decisive talents for command; and although I believe in my conscience that, when he found himself superseded, he suffered the pigs to run through the business, when he might in some measure have prevented them—

'Yet give the haughty devil his due,
Though bold his quarterings, they were true.'

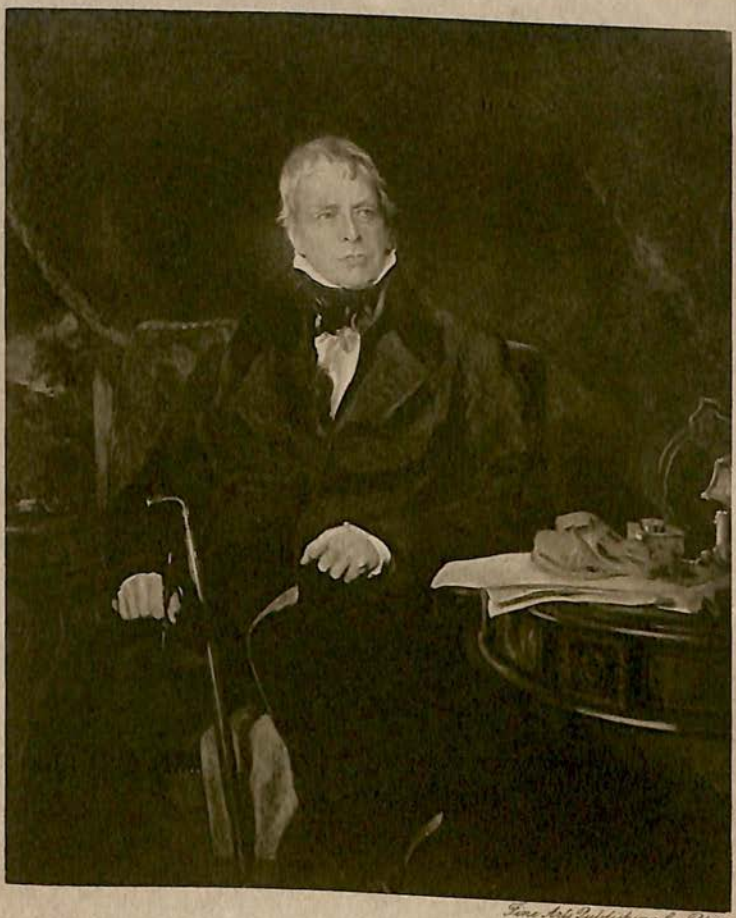
Such a man, with an army of 40,000 or 50,000 British, with the remains of the Galician army . . . might place Buonaparte in the precarious situation of a general with 100,000 enemies between him and his supplies. . . .' I heartily wish our generals would learn to play for the gammon, and not sit down contented with a mere saving game."[1]

Quarrel of Castlereagh and Canning, 1808.

Canning and Castlereagh, the operative members of the Portland Cabinet, though of one mind about carrying on war in the Peninsula, differed violently about the Convention of Cintra. Castlereagh held that a commander-in-chief in the field was invested with power to pledge the faith of his Government, and that refusal to fulfil treaty obligations undertaken by the said commander-in-chief would reflect upon the honour of the Crown. This view having been ratified at a Cabinet meeting from which Canning happened to be absent, he submitted to the King his reasons for disagreeing with his colleagues. He held that the King and his Government could not be bound by stipulations affecting Spain and Portugal to which the consent of these Powers had neither been sought nor obtained, and he urged that these stipulations should be declared void. The Cabinet, supported by the King, adhered to its decision.[2] The Convention of Cintra was carried out in all its obnoxious details; but Canning never forgave Castlereagh.

In the loss of Portugal, the capitulation of Baylen, and

[1] Lockhart's *Life of Scott*, ii. 226.
[2] Castlereagh *Correspondence*, vi. 455–471.



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Sir Walter Scott, Bart.

from the painting by Sir Thomas Lawrence

LONDON: EDWARD ARNOLD 1909.

the flight of King Joseph from Madrid, Napoleon had suffered the first important reverse to his arms and authority in Europe. These events convinced him for the first time of the magnitude and difficulty of the task he had undertaken in the Peninsula; he had learnt, also for the first time, that British troops, rightly handled, were something to be reckoned with, and, which was still more serious and disquieting, that there was at least one British general capable of so handling them. There was cause for uneasiness in another quarter. Austria had been manifesting great diligence in military preparation; she must be cowed into inactivity till Napoleon's authority in Spain was re-established. The greater urgency, therefore, for a thorough understanding with Russia. The behaviour of Admiral Siniavin in the Tagus had been the reverse of satisfactory during the war in Portugal. He had not supported Junot as he should have done, declaring that his instructions contained nothing to show that his Emperor was at war with the Portuguese.

Setting great store by the active support of Russia in central Europe, Napoleon invited the Emperor Alexander to a conference at Erfurth, which lasted from 27th September till 14th October. War was in Napoleon's heart, for he had just called out 160,000 conscripts and taken 80,000 Rhenish troops into the pay and uniform of France; but peace was on his lips, for Europe was sighing for peace, and a number of subsidiary crowned heads had been bidden to the conference. War it should be, but England must bear the odium of prolonging it. To this end, a joint letter signed by the two Emperors was addressed to George III.:—

Conference of the Emperors at Erfurth, Sept. 27, Oct. 14, 1808.

"We entreat your Majesty—we unite to entreat your Majesty to listen to the voice of humanity; to silence that of passion; to seek to conciliate all interests with the intention of arriving at pacification, and thus, preserving the happiness of Europe and of this generation, at the head of which Providence has placed us."

Nothing could be more adroit; for the second time during this titanic warfare King George's Ministers were

made to appear the only obstacles to universal peace. Ever a diligent reader of English newspapers, Napoleon was continually misled by the speeches of the Opposition in Parliament, but in this passionate appeal in "the voice of humanity" he intended more than to give the Opposition fresh material for invective; he would stir the feelings of a multitude weary of endless, aimless bloodshed. Not for the first time, nor yet for the last, did Napoleon misinterpret the true spirit of the British nation and underrate the discernment of their Ministers. His olive branch was rejected as a fraud. Canning met his overtures with defiance. He replied to the letter, not directly to the Emperors, but separately to their respective Ministers. To the Russian he explained that "owing to the unusual manner in which the letters signed by his Imperial Majesty were drawn up," the King could not reply direct to the Emperor Alexander "without at the same time acknowledging titles which his Majesty never has acknowledged"—namely, those of Napoleon as Emperor of the French and Joseph Bonaparte as King of Spain. To the French Minister Canning avoided all mention of either Emperor, simply said in effect that the King deplored the misery caused by the war, "although his Majesty cannot be expected to hear with unqualified regret that the system devised for the destruction of the commerce of his subjects has recoiled upon its authors or its instruments." To both Ministers it was explained that King George could enter upon no negotiations to which his ally the King of Sweden, and his friends the Government of Spain, were not admitted as parties. If they were so admitted, then he would agree to treat on the basis of *uti possidetis*. Upon this point the negotiations were broken off, as was foreseen and desired by Napoleon they should be. His intention in that respect need hardly be called in question. Great Britain could not be false to the Spanish nation which she had undertaken to defend; she could not be blind to the continuous movement of French troops through the Pyrenees, nor deaf to the manifesto which Napoleon had issued to his army a few days before the conference at Erfurth. As a literary curiosity, it is good

Canning's reply, 28th Oct. 1808.

to compare this characteristic document with the business-like tone of the general orders dictated by him who was to prove the instrument of Napoleon's overthro—

"Soldiers!" ran one paragraph—

"Soldiers! I have need of you! The hideous presence of the leopard[1] contaminates by its presence the territories of Spain and Portugal. In terror he must fly before you. Let us carry our victorious eagles even to the Pillars of Hercules, there also we have injuries to avenge. . . . Soldiers! all that you have done, all that you will do, for the happiness of the French people, *and for my glory*, shall be eternal in my heart."

While the Emperors were tampering with destiny at Erfurth, and the attention of the British public was absorbed in bickerings and recrimination over the Convention of Cintra, matters in the Peninsula were at a standstill. Wellesley, pending the report of the Court of Inquiry, had returned to his post at the Irish Office, and was immersed in correspondence about peerages, patronage, and dirty bedding in Irish barracks. It had been the intention of the British Government to send out strong reinforcements to Sir Hew Dalrymple in Lisbon, and, so early as 2nd September, instructions had been given him to move with 30,000 men to co-operate with Blake and Castaños on the Ebro. But the first of these reinforcements, 12,000 troops under Sir David Baird, did not reach Coruña till 13th October, by which date Dalrymple had been recalled and Sir John Moore had taken over command of the army in Portugal. The instructions to Dalrymple held good for his successor, but Moore found that no progress had been made, either with surveying the roads towards the frontier or of preparing transport for the army.

In all our military annals there is no memory more fondly cherished than Moore's. Of the highest order of courage, a skilful tactician and experienced in war, endeared by personal qualities and charm of manner to his friends and to those under his command— all these attributes have been enhanced by the noble manner in which he met his death, in the moment of victory. Yet

Sir John Moore, 1761–1809.

[1] Alluding to the ancient arms of the kings of England, three leopards passant, usually described in modern parlance as lions.

it must be owned that Moore was unequal to h... ...pointed task. He was deficient in that iron spirit which, concentrated upon a single clear-cut design, bends the intellects of other men to its purpose. Moore's character and work have been viewed until lately chiefly through Napier's spectacles—Napier, always eloquent, sometimes indiscreet, and often gravely misleading, has swayed the judgment of generations by sheer vehemence of assertion. For Napier was a vehement Whig, incapable of admitting that anything could be honestly conceived and worthily executed by a Tory Cabinet. As soon would he have expected to gather figs off thistles. His noble history of the Peninsular War is marred by incessant reproach, generally unjust, heaped upon King George's Ministers. Unbounded in his affection and admiration for Moore, he interpreted his idol's quarrel with Canning and Castlereagh as arising out of their distrust of a Whig general, and he launched his tradition with so great momentum, and winged it with such fiery eloquence, that later writers have accepted and handed it forward with scarcely a question as to its truth. It has been shown above that Moore was no Whig, but a Ministerialist, and we have it under his own hand that the origin of his quarrel with Ministers was his "unhandsome treatment" in having Dalrymple and Burrard put over his head.[1] The recall of these officers left Moore in the position to which he had honourably aspired—the chief command of the British army in the Peninsula. Wellesley's brief campaign had cleared Portugal of French troops and provided his successor with a secure base at Lisbon; but neither the Spanish nor Portuguese armies had improved one whit by training under their incompetent officers, while the Juntas were unable, sometimes unwilling, to afford the necessary support to the British field force. King George's generals, be it remembered, were debarred by the honourable rules of the service from the licence accorded to French officers to exact forced contributions. Moore might not obtain transport for a single brigade without paying for it, and for many weeks all the money sent from England went in subsidies to the Juntas; but

Moore's campaign, Oct. 1808–Jan. 1809.

[1] *Diary*, ii. 242.

once Moore got to work, he was all fire and energy. On 11th October he managed to send off the advanced portion of his force, intending to form a junction at Valladolid with Sir David Baird, who was to march from Coruña. The plan miscarried. There was no time to survey the roads; the reports of Portuguese officers were contradictory and misleading; the army was split up to proceed by different and circuitous routes, so that, although Moore reached Salamanca with his leading brigades on 13th November, the cavalry and guns did not arrive until 4th December, and Baird's division never arrived at all. Want of cash had prevented him obtaining the necessary means of transport.[1]

In the meantime the scene had changed very much for the worse. Moore's original objective had been Burgos; on 8th November Napoleon had arrived in person at Vittoria to take supreme command of his eight *corps d'armée*, numbering about 200,000 men; Soult had destroyed the army of Estremadura at Burgos on 10th November; Victor had defeated Blake at Espinosa on the 11th; Castaños and Palafox had been utterly routed at Tudela on the 23rd by Marshal Lannes. Moore, seeing that his concentration had utterly broken down, issued orders for instant retreat.

Moore decides upon retreat, 28th Nov. 1808.

"I have determined to give the whole thing up," he wrote on 28th November to Sir John Hope, whose column was still on the march from Elvas, "and to retire. It was my wish to have run great risks to fulfil what I conceive to be the wishes of the people of England, and to give every aid to the Spanish cause; but they have shown themselves equal to do so little for themselves, that it would only be sacrificing this army, without doing any good to Spain, to oppose it to such numbers as must now be brought against it. . . . This is a cruel determination for me to make, but I hope you will think the circumstances such as demand it."

There, in a sentence, is revealed the weakness of Moore's character: he was unduly sensible of responsibility, ever thinking how others would judge of his actions.[2]

[1] Napier, as usual, blames the home Government for neglecting to send money supplies. There is not the least foundation for this; it was the difficulty of getting enough silver coin that caused the delay.

[2] Compare a sentence from a letter by Wellington to his brother Henry. "I may fail; I shall be confoundedly abused; I may lose the little character

In a few days Moore changed his mind. So extreme was the dismay of the Spanish Junta at the prospect of being left to the mercy of the French marshals, so urgent was Mr. Frere, British ambassador to the Junta, that it would be to the dishonour of England if the people of Madrid were not supported in defending their city against Napoleon, that Sir John decided to advance upon the capital. But he felt no confidence in the results. "I own," he wrote to Castlereagh in announcing his change of plan, "that I cannot derive much hope from the resistance of one town against forces so formidable,[1] unless the spark catches and the flame becomes pretty general." On the same day, 5th December, he issued orders to Baird and Hope to resume the advance. "I mean to proceed bridle in hand," was his caution to Baird, "for, if the bubble bursts and Madrid falls, we shall have a run for it." There breathed the spirit whereof catastrophe is most surely bred. A man may drive his fist unhurt through an oaken panel, provided he aims the blow at something *a foot beyond the door;* if he strikes at the surface of the wood, he shall come by broken joints. Moore seems not to have realised that the difficulties of the French were quite as great as his own. They were in superior force, it is true, but the whole population was bitterly hostile to them. Aides-de-camp and mounted officers carrying despatches were waylaid and murdered; small detachments were cut off; every village required a garrison to repress revolt, for although the Spanish armies were wrecks, the whole country swarmed with guerrilla. Moore had with him the enthusiastic sympathy of both country and town folk; and although he complained with justice, as Wellington did afterwards, of the failure of the Juntas to fulfil their promises of transport and supplies, at

The advance resumed, 11th Dec. 1808.

I have gained; but I should not act fairly by the Government if I did not tell them my real opinion, which is, that they will betray the honour and interests of the country if they do not continue their efforts in the Peninsula."

[1] Moore was in deplorable ignorance about the real strength of the French armies in Spain. A week later than this he told Castlereagh that they might "fairly be set down at 80,000 men, besides what is in Catalonia," whereas in sober fact Napoleon had not less than a quarter of a million troops south of the Pyrenees.

all events they did what was possible for an improvised government dealing with a disorganised service, whereof the imperfection was not of their own creation.

Sir John Moore, then, ordered a general advance, but the bubble had burst already. Madrid had capitulated on 4th December to Napoleon in person, although authentic news of this disaster did not reach the British head-quarters for some days. By that time the army was committed to an advance; but, instead of marching on the capital, Moore turned northward, threatening the French lines of communication, and thereby dislocating Napoleon's whole plan of campaign. On 20th December Moore's concentration was completed at Mayorga, and a brilliant cavalry success on the same day at Sahagun sent the whole army forward, eager for an encounter with Soult, who was known to be in their front. None more eager, we may be sure, than their commander, yet had he never a word of encouragement for the anxious hearts at home. His despatches breathe the same despondent spirit with which he set out from England. He may win a battle or two, but the uselessness of it! "It will be very agreeable to give a wipe to such a corps [Soult's], although with respect to the cause generally it will probably have no effect. . . . It will be attended with no other advantage than the character it will attach to the British arms."[1]

On 23rd December Moore received intelligence that Napoleon, at the head of 50,000 Guards, was hurrying from Madrid to attack him. After less than an hour's deliberation he ordered a retreat.

[1] "In my life," said one who was present, "I never witnessed such an instantaneous effect upon any body of living creatures. A few murmurs only were heard, but every countenance was changed, and they who, the minute before, were full of that confidence which insures victory, were at once deprived of all life and hope."[2]

With a force of some 25,000 effectives, Moore at first directed his retreat upon Vigo, but as this port was found

[1] Moore to Castlereagh, 16th December.
[2] Southey's *War in the Peninsula*, ii. 493.

to be unsuitable for embarkation, the transports were ordered round to Coruña. The severest test that can be applied to any army is that of prolonged retreat, and Moore's proved unequal to it. Paget's light cavalry, the Guards brigade, and Craufurd's light infantry set a noble example of steadiness; among the rest, discipline utterly broke down; pillaging, drunkenness, and straggling increased to a frightful degree. Seldom has a British commander-in-chief issued such a general order as Moore's at Lugo on 6th January:—

Retreat resumed, 23rd Dec. 1808.

"Generals and Commanding Officers must be as aware as the Commander of the Forces of the complete disorganisation of the Army. . . . The Commander of the Forces is tired of giving orders which are never attended to. . . . He was forced to order one soldier to be shot at Villafranca, and he will order all others to be executed who are guilty of similar enormities; but he considers that there would be no occasion to proceed to such extremities if the officers did their duty; as it is chiefly from their negligence . . . that crimes and irregularities are committed in quarters and upon the march."

At Bembibre, on 31st December, the French slaughtered some hundreds of British infantry who had been left behind helplessly drunk, and the same took place at Villafranca on 3rd January. On 1st January Napoleon handed over the pursuit to Soult, and turning back at Astorga, travelled posthaste to Paris. From that point it was a race for the ships. The British headquarters reached Coruña on 12th January; but the transports, detained by contrary winds, did not arrive till the 14th, when the cavalry, artillery, and 2000 or 3000 invalids were sent on board at once. This, allowing for 5000 men lost during the retreat and 3500 who had been embarked at Vigo, left Moore with 15,000 infantry and nine guns to meet Soult's attack, which was imminent.

Moore made good use of his four days' respite. He armed his troops afresh from the arsenal, and destroyed what he could not use. Then "the leopards" turned to bay, and splendid atonement was made for the vacillation of the commander and the disorders of the retreat. On the afternoon of the 15th Soult had 20,000 men in order of battle before the British position. Next day he attacked

Battle of Coruña and death of Moore, Jan. 1809.

in force, but was completely repulsed with heavy losses, darkness alone saving him from a disastrous defeat. Sir John Moore, his left side frightfully shattered by a cannon-shot, lived long enough to receive assurance of victory, the command devolving upon Sir John Hope, under whose direction the embarkation was effected during the night and following morning; and the army was saved.

Saved—at least so much as remained of the most powerful force England had hitherto set in the field against Napoleon. How would the people of England brook this disaster? Would they turn upon the King's Ministers, reviling them for infirm counsels and imputing to them the guilt of all the blood that had been wasted? Would Ministers own themselves beaten, and withdraw from a task wherein every other nation had been ground to ruin or bound to submission? Far otherwise. There followed, of course, the usual recrimination between Government and Opposition in Parliament; but, so early as 2nd February, the House of Commons was discussing Castlereagh's proposal for augmenting the army. A formal treaty had been concluded between Great Britain and Spain on 14th January, whereby King George bound himself "to continue to assist to the utmost of his power the Spanish nation in their struggle against the tyranny and usurpation of France," and to this end the Government, supported by the unflinching resolve of the nation, applied themselves with redoubled energy.

Treaty of alliance between Great Britain and Spain, 14th Jan. 1809.

The English leopards had been driven into the sea, yet had not Moore's labour and life been spent in vain, nor the losses and sufferings of his army been endured to no purpose. Civilians in general, perhaps a good many soldiers, might be at a loss to explain why the expulsion of a British army from Spain, after a long and painful retreat in the depth of winter, should have been assigned so high a rank among feats of arms. The reason is that the advance upon Sahagun not only diverted 70,000 troops from the invasion of Portugal, thereby frustrating Napoleon's proclaimed purpose of "planting his eagles on the towers of Lisbon," but it dislocated his whole plan of campaign. It

arrested the movement of the French armies upon the southern provinces of Spain, thus affording time for the nationalists to arm and organise. The subsequent retreat upon Coruña drew off 45,000 troops into the remote province of Galicia, and coincided with, if it did not cause, the hurried departure of Napoleon himself from the Peninsula, never to return. That moment marked the turn of the tide in the Emperor's ascendency in Europe; although the conscious and deliberate part wrought in that result by Moore will remain matter of controversy for all time. It would be ungenerous, it might be unjust, to withhold credit from his memory as the operative agent in securing a great advantage for Spain and Portugal. Yet if Moore had not found a soldier's death—if he had lived to bring back to England fourteen thousand haggard survivors of the splendid army entrusted to him—what reception would he have met with among his countrymen?

CHAPTER VI

Military resources of Great Britain—The Clarke scandal—Resignation of the Duke of York—The two voices—The campaign of Talavera—Wellesley marches against Soult—Passage of the Douro and recapture of Oporto—Expulsion of the French from Portugal—Wellesley's difficulties with Cuesta—The British army enters Spain—Battle of Talavera—Soult appears at Plasencia—Wellesley escapes across the Tagus—Sir John Stuart's second expedition to Calabria—Expedition to Walcheren Island—Capitulation of Flushing—Evacuation of Walcheren Island—Canning's intrigue against Castlereagh—The Cabinet crisis—Duel between Castlereagh and Canning—Mr. Perceval forms an administration.

AT no period of its history has the outlook for the United Kingdom been so full of menace as it was at the beginning of 1809. For fifteen years the British people had borne the strain of continental war. Napoleon had calculated that a nation of fifteen millions must succumb to one of forty millions; much surer seemed its effacement now that the millions of Russia, of Prussia, and of a whole forest of smaller powers were thrown into the scale against England. The mere problem how, without having recourse to forced service, recruits should be forthcoming to repair the war losses of an establishment numbering 240,000 soldiers (including the Hanoverian contingent)—that problem alone, I say, might have daunted Ministers in their resolution. No pains were taken to render military life attractive to the rank and file. The code of discipline was almost incredibly severe; it requires the testimony of such an unimpeachable witness as Sir Charles Napier to convince one that from 600 to 1000 lashes were frequently the sentence of a *regimental* court-martial.

Military resources of Great Britain, 1809.

"I have seen," says he, "many hundreds of men flogged, and have always observed that when the skin is thoroughly cut up or flayed off, the great pain subsides. Men are frequently convulsed and screaming during the time they receive from one lash to three hundred lashes, and then they bear the remainder, even to eight

hundred or a thousand lashes, without a groan. They will often lie as if without life, and the drummers appear to be flogging a lump of dead, raw flesh. Now I have frequently observed that, in these cases, the faces of the spectators assumed a look of disgust; there was always a low whispering sound, scarcely audible, issuing from the apparently stern and silent ranks—a sound arising from lips that spoke not."

To administer a code of such demoniac ferocity surely required superhuman qualities of discrimination, or, at least, a higher average of the judicial faculty than can be found in any class untrained to law. Hear upon that point the evidence of Sir Robert Wilson, speaking of what he saw during 1794–95 in the Netherlands:—

"At that time it was the fashion to drink as drunkards daily, and the drink was strong port wine instead of the pure vintage of France. . . . What shocked me most was to see courts-martial adjudging men to be punished for an offence of which the members themselves had often been guilty at the same time, and from which they had frequently not recovered when passing sentence. . . . At the same time that the British soldiers were maintaining with such devoted fortitude the glory of England, their camps daily presented the most disgusting and painful scenes of punishment. The halberds were regularly erected along the lines every morning, and the shrieks of the sufferers made a pandemonium, from which the foreigner fled with terror and astonishment at the severity of our military code."

To counteract the deterrent effect of this system upon recruiting, recourse was had (officially) to high bounties, from six to eleven guineas being the scale in 1809, and (unofficially) to crimping, kidnapping, and the liberal exhibition of drink.

As for the officers, the army had become the recognised dumping ground for stupid boys. Arthur Wellesley was a dull lad, slow of speech and backward in learning. His mother, Lady Mornington, a clever woman, pronounced him "fit for powder, and nothing more," so she obtained for him a commission at seventeen. Wellesley had plenty of influential relations at his back, and was heard of again; it is perhaps useless to speculate how high he might have risen had he been born in a country parsonage. There may

have been many a mute, inglorious Wellington in the Georgian era.

No system of promotion can be devised without flaws, but it was discovered in 1809 that the system in force was tainted at its very source. The Duke of York, second son of George III., having adopted the profession of arms, had been entrusted with the command of the campaigns of 1793–95 and 1799, wherein he gained no renown. But having become Commander-in-Chief at the Horse Guards in 1798, he had administered that office wisely and well, instituting many reforms, and effecting some improvement in the conditions in garrison and camp. In his private life the Duke was not less irregular than his brothers; but the British public was lenient in its judgment of persons of quality—*quod licet Jovi, non licet bovi*—and York was much more popular than the other royal dukes.

The Clarke scandal, 27th Jan. 1809.

The cause of the Duke of York's undoing was a certain Mary Anne Clarke, wife of a builder, whom his Royal Highness kept as his mistress for several years, dismissing her with a pension in 1807. Mrs. Clarke having passed under the protection of Colonel Wardle, M.P., the pension was stopped; whereupon the lady, in revenge, accused the Duke of having shared with her the profits upon the corrupt sale of military commissions and promotion. The case was brought before the House of Commons by Colonel Wardle on 27th January 1809; when it was roundly stated that officers desiring promotion had to bribe Mrs. Clarke to use her influence with the Commander-in-Chief. Commissions vacated by death or dismissal ought either to have been bestowed upon meritorious officers or sold, and the proceeds paid into the half-pay fund, which was intended for the reward of meritorious service; whereas it was alleged that Mrs. Clarke had been allowed to dispose of such commissions and to pocket their price. A peculiarly gross case was that of one Major Shaw, who had received an appointment at the Cape in consideration for £1000 promised to Mrs. Clarke, but who, having failed to pay her more than £500, was deprived at her instance of his appointment and put on half-pay. The blackest part of

this ugly affair was the allegation that the Commander-in-Chief had full cognisance of these nefarious doings, and even shared in the pecuniary profit derived therefrom.

Inquiry was undertaken by Committee of the whole House; witnesses were examined at the Bar, and a letter from the Duke of York to the Speaker was read, in which his Royal Highness asserted his innocence "upon my honour as a Prince," and denied all knowledge of the proceedings which had been dragged to light. On 17th March the Chancellor of the Exchequer (Mr. Perceval) moved that the House was of opinion that the charges against the Duke were "wholly without foundation"; to which Sir T. Turton moved an amendment, directly affirming the Duke's guilt. This was rejected by a majority of 199; but it was a different thing to declare that "the charges were wholly without foundation." Rather than commit themselves to that opinion, no fewer than 95 members walked out, and the Chancellor's resolution was carried by a majority of only 82.

The Duke of York resigns, 20th March 1809.

When the House resumed on 20th March, Castlereagh announced that, as it had passed a resolution affirming the Duke's innocence, his Royal Highness had felt at liberty to tender his resignation as Commander-in-Chief, and that his Majesty had been pleased to accept it.

There was the end of an unsavoury business. It had been better for the fame of the Duke of York if his acquittal had been pronounced by a more impartial tribunal. The High Court of Parliament, even at this day, is the unfittest body in the realm for judicial proceedings. "My party, right or wrong!" is the *mot d'ordre* of the ordinary member. How much greater was the mockery of an examination by the House of Commons of charges involving the honour of a Prince of the Blood, in days when the very existence of the Ministry depended upon the favour of the monarch. In this case, every speech delivered —every vote given—for the accused came from the Government side; the prosecution lay entirely with the Opposition.

The affair had consequences extending far beyond the army. In the course of the investigation attention was forcibly drawn to the prevalence of corruption in almost every branch of the public service. Church preferment, East Indian appointments, seats in the House of Commons, even subordinate posts in the Government—all had been made the subject of clandestine traffic, with regular business agencies started to conduct it. The Clarke scandal gave an enormous impetus to the zeal of reformers, and for many years to come the most active members of the Opposition were usefully employed in exposing and hunting down jobs, sinecures, and perpetual pensions.

Second expedition to the Peninsula, 1809.

It was in a dark hour that the British army undertook the mightiest task to which it had ever been set—the expulsion of the French from the Peninsula; an hour dark with the double gloom of Sir John Moore's disaster abroad and the Clarke scandal at home. The fall of Madrid and the retreat of Sir John Moore's army had left Andalusia open and almost defenceless to any advance the French might make into that region. Canning, therefore, faithful to the Spanish alliance, made overtures to the Junta for the landing of British troops at Cadiz; but Moore had drawn upon himself the storm that had threatened the southern provinces; wherefore the Junta, regaining confidence in their own resources, emphatically refused to permit a British occupation of Cadiz, sniffing a design for the establishment of a second Gibraltar. This threw Canning and Castlereagh back upon the original design of assisting Spain through Portugal. At their elbows stood Sir Arthur Wellesley, never wavering in his faith in Portugal as the true fulcrum for operations against Napoleon. Like every question, this one had more than a single side. There was high opinion to be weighed against that of the youngest lieutenant-general in the service: to which of two voices should Ministers lend an ear?

Sir John Moore to Lord Castlereagh, 25th Nov. 1808.

"I can say generally that the frontier of Portugal is not defensible against a superior force. It is an open frontier, all equally rugged, but all equally to be penetrated. If the French succeed in Spain it will be vain to attempt to resist them in Portugal. The Portuguese are without a military force . . . no dependence can be placed on any aid that they can give. The British must in that event, I conceive, immediately take steps to evacuate the country. . . . We might check the progress of the enemy while the stores are embarking and arrangements are being made for taking off the army. Beyond this, the defence of Lisbon or of Portugal should not be thought of."

The two voices.

Sir Arthur Wellesley to Lord Castlereagh, 7th March 1809.

"I have always been of opinion that Portugal might be defended, whatever might be the result of the contest in Spain, and that in the meantime measures adopted for the defence of Portugal would be highly useful to the Spaniards in their contest with the French. My notion was that the Portuguese military establishment ought to be revived, and that in addition to those troops His Majesty ought to employ about 20,000 British troops, including about 4000 cavalry. My opinion was that, even if Spain should have been conquered, the French would not have been able to overrun Portugal with a smaller force than 100,000 men. As long as the contest may continue in Spain, this force [20,000 British], if it could be placed in a state of activity, would be highly useful to the Spaniards, and might eventually decide the contest."

The voice of Moore was hushed in death; it was of the living Wellesley that Canning and Castlereagh sought counsel. It is only weaklings who ask advice and feel no obligation to act upon it. Neither of these Ministers was a weakling; they carried into immediate effect the advice they received. Already General Beresford had been sent out to undertake thorough organisation of the Portuguese army, and had made good progress with that work, which, at the cost of pretty drastic discipline, and the weeding out of what was past mending, turned the soldiers of Portugal into "the fighting cocks of the army."[1] Sir Robert Wilson,

[1] Wellington *Despatches.* Wellington was fond of quoting an Italian proverb—"Better an army of stags led by a lion, than an army of lions led by a stag." A commission was given in every Portuguese regiment upon its

also, had been raising and training his famous Lusitanian Legion, which was to do excellent service in the near future. Finally, the appeal of the Portuguese Regency was met by the appointment of Sir Arthur Wellesley to the command of a fresh expedition, sufficient to bring up the strength of Sir John Cradock's division in Lisbon to 30,000 of all arms. Cradock was sent to govern Gibraltar; to Wellesley, who finally resigned the Irish Secretaryship and his seat in Parliament, was committed the command of the whole force for the defence of Portugal.

There is no opinion more general than that King George's Ministers, however ready they were to send out expeditions, neglected to support them in the field. Writer has followed writer in wearisome iteration of this charge, taking the cue from Napier, who, brilliant and persuasive as a chronicler, never could bring himself to say a good word for a Tory Government. Nevertheless, in regard to the Peninsular war, there is abundant and direct evidence to refute this fable. Wellesley asked at first for 20,000 men; when he increased his estimate by one-third, reinforcements to that extent were put in orders. And so it continued during the five years of warfare; whatever the Commander-in-Chief required or asked for he obtained. Money, indeed, was often inconveniently scarce; not because of the parsimony of Parliament, but by reason of unpunctuality in remittance, inevitable in days when ships moved only by favouring winds. There would be an end once and for all to the senseless parrot cry against the war administration of the Portland, Perceval, and Liverpool Cabinets if people would but give ear to the man on the spot.

"I have always," wrote Wellington to Lord Mahon in 1836, "in public as well as in private, declared my obligations to the Government for the encouragement and support they gave me, and the confidence with which they treated me. . . . I should not like to say [as he had been quoted as saying] that I supported them more than they supported me. In one sense it is true. It is quite certain that my opinion alone was the cause of the continuance of the war in the Peninsula. My letters show that I

patron saint, for whom full pay was drawn and handed over to some religious house dedicated to his memory. Among Beresford's earliest reforms was the removal of these shadowy warriors from the pay-sheet.

encouraged, nay forced, the Government to persevere in it. The success of the operations of the army supported them in power; but it is not true that they did not, in every way in their power—as individuals—as Ministers and as a Government—support me."[1]

The return of spring had revived the activity of the French generals. Marshal Soult, leaving Ney to deal with a formidable insurrection in Galicia, crossed the Portuguese frontier on 9th March, exactly five months since the last of Junot's army had quitted the kingdom. Brushing aside Romana's Spanish corps and such Portuguese forces as lay in his way, Soult took Oporto by storm on the 29th and gave that city over to the horrors of a sack. The presence of Cradock's corps at Lisbon sufficed to check his further advance, added to which he had to deal with serious disaffection, amounting to mutinous conspiracy, among his own officers.

The campaign of Talavera, 1809.

Landing at Lisbon on 22nd April, Wellesley found himself within striking distance of two French armies—that of Soult at Oporto, 24,000 strong, and that of Victor at Merida, 30,000 strong. Vividly aware of the importance of scoring an early success for the gratification of the British public, which is ever impatient of Fabian strategy, he knew, on the other hand, that defeat meant recall and ruin for himself, and, what counted for a great deal more with that sane head and stout heart, the probable abandonment of England's contest with Napoleon upon land. Disposing of these weighty considerations in a few hours, he decided upon attacking Soult. He had under his command 25,000 British and 16,000 Portuguese troops, and 5000 more were on the voyage from England. Detaching General Mackenzie with 12,000 men to act at Abrantes as a check upon Victor, and directing Beresford to march with 5800 men to act as a flanking force upon the right of the main advance, he completed a concentration of 18,370 troops,

Wellesley marches against Soult, May 1809.

[1] Stanhope's *Conversations*, p. 82. Napier makes out Perceval to have been the worst of the three Prime Ministers in this respect, but Wellington told Greville that he considered Napier very unfair to Perceval (Greville *Memoirs*, part i. vol. iii. 271).

with 24 guns, at Coimbra on 1st May. Soult, whose force of 24,000 was dangerously extended upon a front of forty miles, was preparing to evacuate Oporto and retreat with his plunder into Leon. Wellesley moved forward from Coimbra on 7th May, driving Franceschi out of Albergaria on the 10th and from Grijo on the 11th. Early on the morning of the 12th he was surveying the city of Oporto from the height of Serra on the south bank of the Douro. His army had covered eighty miles in four days, besides skirmishing with the troops of Franceschi and Mermet. These generals, after retiring across the river, had destroyed the pontoon bridge, and every boat had been collected and taken to the northern side.

While Wellesley was thus reconnoitring the city, Soult was just going to bed. He had been dictating despatches all night, giving directions for the retreat of his columns upon Amarante, and bestowing little thought upon his enemy. Was not that river, flowing swift and deep between rocky and precipitous banks, sufficient security against any menace from the south? He had still to learn the kind of man he had to deal with. Wellesley had come to recapture Oporto: the rushing Douro balked his purpose no more than the sluggish Kaitna had done at Assaye.

A Portuguese barber had come over from the town in a skiff during the night, and informed the Prior of Amarante, an enthusiastic patriot, that the French expected an attack from the sea and had pickets out in that direction, but that higher up the river, along the eastern suburb, no watch was kept, although there were empty wine-barges lying under the steep river-bank in that quarter. The Prior imparted this news to Colonel Waters, a most excellent scout, who, seeing a slender chance, seized it. Taking with them two or three peasants, Waters and the Prior caused the barber to ferry them over to the French side, where they secured four barges and managed to bring them back without attracting attention. Wellesley sent for Rowland Hill, and ordered him to occupy the Bishop's Seminary, a deserted building standing high within a walled enclosure in the eastern suburb. A party of the 3rd Buffs embarked,

Passage of the Douro, 12th May 1809.

pushed off, and occupied the Seminary without alarming the French. To and fro plied the barges, until the old building held a strong garrison of redcoats. Then did the French drums beat to arms; Soult tumbled out of bed; his staff started from their midday meal, and Foy hurried battalion after battalion "to push the English into the river." Need was there for harder pushing, seeing that Wellesley had quietly brought up eighteen guns to the Serra Hill, which swept with shrapnel the approaches to the Seminary. The citizens, finding the quays unguarded, rushed to their boats and began ferrying over the Guards and Stewart's brigade; these, marching unopposed through the streets, fell upon the flank and rear of the French. Soult, under pressure of this unexpected attack, beat a retreat which soon broke into a rout. In miserable weather he led his columns through the Sierra Catalina, having abandoned all his sick, lost or destroyed all his guns, and burned all his baggage and plunder. His stragglers and wounded were murdered in scores by the country people. On 19th May he entered the Spanish town of Orense, having lost about 5700 men out of the fine army of 25,000 with which he had invaded Portugal ten weeks before. Moore's retreat was amply avenged; for, whereas Moore had brought his army to Coruña in condition for winning a pitched battle, Soult had lost every gun, and his starving soldiers had no more ammunition than was left in their pouches. For the second time within a year, he whom Napoleon had sneered at as "a Hindú general" had driven every French soldier out of Portugal, this time with a loss to his own force of no more than 500 killed and wounded. The reason for Soult's ultimate escape is simply set forth in Wellesley's letter to Castlereagh:—

Expulsion of the French from Portugal, 19th May 1809.

"It is obvious that if an army throws away all its cannon, equipment, and baggage, and everything that can strengthen it and enable it to act together as a body; and if it abandons all those who are entitled to its protection, but add to its weight and impede its progress, it must be able to march on roads on which it cannot be followed, with any prospect of being overtaken, by an army which has not made the same sacrifices."

Having effectively disposed of Soult, and understanding that Ney had his hands full in Galicia and Asturias, Wellesley felt free to turn his attention upon Victor, who still kept the headquarters of the 1st corps at Merida. Napoleon, profoundly ignorant of Soult's disaster, news of which did not even reach Madrid till 10th June, had ordered Victor to co-operate with Soult in an advance upon Lisbon; but this Victor could not do without exposing his flank and rear to the army of Estremadura, mustering 23,000 sabres and bayonets under the Captain-General Cuesta. He therefore retired behind the Tagus, establishing his corps about Talavera de la Reyna.

Wellesley's real difficulties began when he opened communications with Cuesta, proposing immediate operations against Victor. The Spanish Captain-General was old, infirm, and irritable; moreover, events in Seville had tended to excite his prejudice against the British general. The Liberals in the Junta had been intriguing busily for the removal of Cuesta from the chief command, and the British ambassador, Frere, perhaps with more zeal than discretion, had been trying to get Wellesley appointed generalissimo of the Spanish forces, as he had already been made in the Portuguese army. It had been well for the allies, no doubt, had that appointment been made thus early in the war; but some bitter lessons had to be learnt before the proudest nation in the world could be brought to such a confession of weakness. Cuesta, fully informed of all that had gone on in Seville, was in no cordial humour towards his foreign colleague, and, from the first, raised incessant objection to everything that Wellesley proposed. However, a plan was agreed upon at last, and on 3rd July Wellesley crossed the Spanish frontier with 21,000 British troops, having Sir Robert Wilson's Lusitanians as a flanking column to the north. On the 8th the British headquarters reached Plasencia; on the 11th Wellesley had his first interview with Cuesta, who lay on the north side of the Tagus at Almaraz, with an army reinforced to the strength of 36,000 effectives, with 30 guns. For the most part these were armed peasantry, splendid material for

Wellesley and Cuesta, June 1809.

The British army enters Spain, 3rd July 1809.

soldiers, but untrained, undisciplined, and commanded by officers generally as ignorant in war as their men.[1]

It was agreed between the two generals that a combined advance be made upon Madrid, and that General Venegas, who commanded the army of La Mancha, 23,000 strong, should move from the south upon Arganda, drawing off Sebastiani's 4th French corps from going to the support of Victor. Venegas, unluckily, was of the opposite faction in politics to Cuesta, and, though nominally under his command, also received orders from the Junta independently of his chief. He disobeyed Cuesta on this occasion, allowed Sebastiani to form a junction with Victor, and thus brought about the failure of the whole campaign.

Be it observed, once for all, how great an advantage was enjoyed by the British and Portuguese armies in this war. They were under a single commander-in-chief, whose Government, having given him general instructions, left him an absolutely free hand in carrying them out. It was far different both with their Spanish allies and their French enemy. The Spanish Juntas showed no confidence in their generals, interfering continually with orders and suggestions; while as to the French, Napoleon fancied that he could direct the movements of corps, and even of divisions and brigades, from a distance of 3000 miles. Detailed instruction and harsh reproof jostled each other in despatches which, penned on the banks of the Danube, were weeks old before they were delivered on the Tagus or the Douro. For example, on 12th June, utterly uninformed about events at Oporto, the Emperor wrote from Schönbrunn, appointing Soult commander-in-chief of an army composed of Mortier's, Ney's, and his own corps, with a detailed plan of campaign for "beating, hunting down, and forcing into the sea the British army." This to a marshal who had lost every gun, destroyed his baggage, and been hunted out of the country in which he was directed to operate! These orders reached King Joseph and Soult on the 1st and 2nd July.

[1] "The men are uncommonly fine; the officers like dried grasses, about the height of three penn'orth of halfpence" (*Letter from Capt. Dumaresq*, 9th Regiment).

It is really remarkable how completely the brilliancy of Napoleon's earlier campaigns have blinded historians to the blunders he committed from the moment he quitted the pursuit of Moore at Astorga—blunders which would shatter, and rightly shatter, the credit of any strategist with his reputation to make. From the first he misinterpreted the nature of the task he undertook in trying to hold Spain, and called upon his armies to perform what was impossible in a country of that physical nature, inhabited by a determined and numerous guerrilla.

Difficulties of transport and supplies, combined with the time necessary for Venegas to comply with Cuesta's orders, caused the general advance of the allies to be delayed till 18th July—a loss of five or six most precious days, allowing a formidable concentration of forces in support of Victor. When the allied army reached Talavera on the 22nd, Victor was drawn up on the eastern bank of the Alberche with but 22,000 men. Wellesley obtained Cuesta's reluctant consent to a combined attack at dawn next day, and had his troops in position at 3 A.M. for that purpose; but the Captain-General had changed his mind; the Spanish army never left its lines, and the golden opportunity went by. The attack was postponed till next morning, when Victor was found to have decamped in the night. Then Wellesley's anger flamed out against his colleague. He informed Cuesta that the British army was on half rations already, that there was no sign of the Junta fulfilling their promise to supply provisions, and that he would not march another furlong in the direction of Madrid. Cuesta was now full of ardour; Victor was in full flight; if the British declined to move, that should not stop the Spanish army taking up the pursuit. "In that case," observed Wellesley grimly, "Cuesta will get himself into a scrape;"[1] a forecast speedily fulfilled; for on the 25th, being then within fifteen miles of Toledo, Cuesta found himself in the presence not only of Victor's corps but of those of Sebastiani and King Joseph—46,000 of the best troops in Europe against 32,000 Spaniards who could not manœuvre. Next morning Cuesta beat a confused retreat, and Victor, strangely slack in

[1] *Despatches* to Frere, 25th July.

pursuit, allowed him to resume his position in Talavera on the 27th.

The whole front of the allies extended nearly three miles in a northerly direction from the banks of the Tagus to the foothills of Montalban. The Spanish army, on the right of the line, were securely ensconced in the walled town of Talavera, and in the extensive gardens and olive grounds surrounding it. The British were extended across the plain, their right flank resting on the olive groves, their left on the slope of the Cerro de Medellin. Victor, not caring to wait till the corps of Joseph and Sebastiani should come up, undertook a reconnaissance in force about seven o'clock in the evening. The approach of the French brought about a display which gave Wellesley, who witnessed it, a foretaste of the quality of his allies. Four Spanish battalions, after firing a tremendous volley at impracticable range, cast away their arms and ran, officers and all, "frightened by the noise of their own fire."[1] They scoured down the valley, spreading reports that the army had been cut to pieces, and some of them fell to plundering the British baggage train.

Battle of Talavera, 27th and 28th July 1809.

Victor, having accomplished his object in ascertaining the disposition of the allies, fell back; but sent Ruffin's division forward for a night attack, which came nearer success than it should have done, had the British pickets been properly posted.

At daybreak on the 28th Ruffin renewed the attack, but was repulsed with heavy loss. Then the three marshals of the French army held a consultation. King Joseph and Jourdan were for taking up a position of observation, until Soult should have time to accomplish his march from the north and fall upon Wellesley's communications. Well for the allies that Victor's fiery temper bore down the sagacity of his colleagues, for the British were in dire straits for want of food; the alcaldes of the neighbouring villages had failed, probably through inability, to supply 250,000 rations contracted for by Wellesley and promised by the Junta. Victor insisted hotly that if Joseph and Jourdan declined

[1] So Wellesley accounted for their panic to Castlereagh.

battle, *il faudrait renoncer à faire la guerre.* They consented reluctantly, wincing by anticipation under the distant Emperor's rebukes should the British army escape from the trap into which it had run.

In truth the trap was far more deadly than Wellesley could have suspected. It was hardly credible that Soult could take the field again so soon after the loss of all his military equipment; nor did the British general know that Ney and Kellermann, having evacuated Galicia and Asturias in disgust, were on the march to form a junction with Soult at Salamanca. Had Wellesley known this, it is hardly probable that he would have remained to the north of the Tagus; certainly he must have fallen back from Talavera.

Victor then carried his purpose. At about two o'clock his columns advanced to the attack, covered by a tremendous artillery fire at 600 and 800 yards range. The Spanish army was left unmolested and innocuous amid the garden walls and olive yards of Talavera throughout the day.[1] The details of the conflict, the steadiness of the British infantry under the impetuous and reiterated onslaught of the French, the precision of their volleys and the ruin wrought by their charge, the timely skill with which Wellesley handled his slender reserve, the ill chance which wrecked the light cavalry—all these must be read in other pages, and may never be read by soldiers without a thrill. At five o'clock the attack had been repulsed at every point. Joseph still held his reserves in hand, but this time he refused to heed Victor's passionate appeal to lead them to a fresh attack. Before nightfall the whole French army was in retreat. "The battle of Talavera," wrote Wellesley to an old Indian comrade, "was the hardest fought of modern times. The fire at Assaye was heavier while it lasted; but the battle of Talavera lasted for two days and a night. Each party engaged lost a fourth of

[1] It would be unjust not to acknowledge the good service rendered by Bassecourt's Spanish division of 5000, which Cuesta sent out to strengthen the British line and which Wellesley posted upon his outer flank; also by the Duke of Albuquerque's cavalry division, six regiments and a battery of horse-artillery, which formed up behind the British cavalry, also on the left of the line.

their numbers."[1] Three circumstances mainly contributed to the victory—Wellesley's sagacity in the choice of a position, the steadiness of the British infantry, and the superiority of line over column as a fighting formation. All that was wanted to turn the retreat of the French into a rout was that Cuesta should move out upon their flank and rear after the attack had finally failed. It was not cowardice that kept him inactive, but simply the inability of his troops to manœuvre. The losses were very heavy on both sides; those of the British amounting to 5365 men, of whom 801 were killed, including two generals and three colonels commanding battalions. The casualties of the French were returned as 7268.

No mention of the battle of Talavera may be so brief as not to make note of the arrival of Robert Craufurd's Light Brigade. Landing at Lisbon after the British had marched, Craufurd set out upon their tracks. At Naval Moral he heard that a battle was impending, dropped his baggage at Oropesa, and pressed forward with his three battalions and the A troop of Horse Artillery, arriving at Talavera only in time to witness the French retreat, having covered forty-three miles in twenty-two hours.[2] These three regiments, the 43rd, 52nd, and 95th, formed the nucleus of the famous Light Division.

Not until 1st August did Wellesley realise how gravely he was compromised by the approach of Soult. Only vague rumours had reached him, but now came certain intelligence that the French were in Plasencia, directly upon his line of communications. Leaving the Spanish commander-in-chief in charge of the British sick and wounded, Wellesley marched on 3rd August, intending to give battle to Soult at Oropesa. But Cuesta, scared by a premature report of Victor's return, left his charge and hastened to join Wellesley. The position was intensely critical. The British general, deprived of his support at Talavera, cut off from his base in Portugal, and hampered by the presence of an

Soult appears at Plasencia, 1st Aug. 1809.

[1] Wellington's *Suppl. Despatches*, vi. 431.

[2] Alison (vol. vii. p. 748) reports Craufurd's march to have been 62 miles in 26 hours, which is probably an exaggerated estimate.

impracticable colleague, learnt for the first time what was Soult's real strength—three corps, numbering 53,000 men. There was but one way to save his army, now reduced to 18,000 effectives, and he took it. Crossing the bridge at Arzobispo, he placed the Tagus between himself and the enemy. Cuesta, as usual, disagreed with Wellesley, declared he would fight the French at Oropesa, but thought better of it, and followed across the river on the 6th. His rearguard was severely handled by Soult's cavalry, losing thirty guns, including fourteen which had been captured from Sebastiani at Talavera. This was his last exploit. A few days later the old man was struck by paralysis and superseded in his command.

Wellesley escapes across the Tagus, 4th Aug. 1809.

Soult earnestly desired to press his advantage by advancing into Portugal; but King Joseph, nervous about the safety of his capital, would not allow it. Disregarding the Emperor's commission to Soult, Joseph deprived him of the 6th corps, sending Ney back to Salamanca for the protection of Leon and Old Castile, and directing Soult to hold his corps in observation. Victor, who was left free to act, declined to hazard his corps in the tremendous defiles of the Sierra de Guadalupe; wherefore the British army remained in a strong defensive position at Zaraicejo and Deleytosa, unmolested, but nearly starving.

On 20th August, therefore, Wellesley broke up and, leaving the wilderness, retired upon the fertile country about Badajos. Here sufficient supplies were forthcoming, and here headquarters remained till 3rd December. The campaign had failed; but its lessons were not thrown away. Never again could Wellesley reckon upon co-operation with Spanish generals, nor rely upon the promises of Spanish Juntas. Henceforward his operations against the French must be conducted independently of such untrustworthy allies. As for the future, he was as far as possible from despair. Canning, having heard of the destruction of the power of Austria at Wagram on 6th July, and of the armistice which left Napoleon free to concentrate his whole strength upon the Peninsula, wrote on 12th August to the Marquess Wellesley, who had replaced Mr. Frere as British Minister at Seville. In this letter Canning threw

upon Sir Arthur Wellesley the whole responsibility of deciding whether the British army should co-operate further with the Spanish forces in offensive movements, whether it should be employed in defensive operations upon the soil of Portugal, or whether it should be withdrawn altogether. Sir Arthur's reply was firm and explicit. After his experience of the reliance to be placed on the Spanish army, and having regard to the reinforcements which Napoleon could send across the Pyrenees, he set aside as hopeless any attempt to regain Madrid, and emphatically warned the Government against entertaining any such design at present; but he spoke with confidence of his power to hold Portugal, or at least Lisbon.[1] Nobody can peruse the despatches of this great commander without being struck by two main features in them—first, a uniform moderation of phrase, amounting sometimes to coldness, and second, an extraordinary accuracy of forecast, enabling him to prepare for events and combinations many months before they came into being. Thus, having given his advice to the British Cabinet, he visited Lisbon in October, and laid the great design which was to make the campaign of the following year one of the most memorable and instructive in military annals.

Leaving the British army in winter quarters, notice must now be made of certain events in England, which, taken in conjunction with the effacement of Austria as a military factor, the failure of Wellesley's march upon Madrid, and the domestic scandal which had brought about the retirement of the Commander-in-Chief, seemed enough to discourage the boldest Ministry—to overthrow the strongest.

Unhappily, Castlereagh had not yet been cured of the inveterate policy of isolated expeditions. Napoleon ever struck at the breast or head of an enemy; Great Britain aimed at crippling the extremities. So now, undeterred by the barrenness of the Maida campaign in 1806, the War Minister planned another attempt upon Calabria and Naples, designing thereby to relieve the pressure upon the Austrian army in Northern Italy. Never did history

[1] Sir A. Wellesley to Lord Castlereagh, 24th Aug. 1809.

repeat itself with more monotonous fidelity. Fifteen thousand British troops embarked in Sicily under the same commander (Sir John Stuart) as led the earlier expedition, took possession of a line of French posts opposite Messina, captured the island fortresses of Ischia and Procida with 1500 prisoners and 100 guns, and then, finding themselves unable to retain their conquests, took ship again for Sicily.

Second expedition to Calabria, June 1809.

Far more ambitious was Castlereagh's other project, with consequences proportionately disastrous. For some years he had nourished the design of operating in the Low Countries in order to encourage Prussia to assume the offensive against Holland, now a Napoleonic kingdom;[1] the campaign of Jena rendered that scheme abortive; but when Austria again took up arms against Napoleon in the spring of 1809, Castlereagh conceived that an effective diversion in her favour might be caused by the seizure of Walcheren Island and Flushing and the destruction of the arsenal and dockyards of Antwerp. Accordingly the most powerful expedition that had ever left the British shores assembled in the Downs towards the end of July, consisting of 39 sail of the line, 36 frigates, and a host of smaller vessels, with an army of 40,000 men. The fleet was commanded by Sir Richard Strachan, an excellent but somewhat choleric officer; the army by the Earl of Chatham, whose solitary recommendation was being the elder brother of Pitt—his one memorable action, that he was the only member of the Court of Inquiry upon the Cintra Convention who voted that Sir Arthur Wellesley should be tried by court-martial.[2]

Expedition to Walcheren Island, July–Dec. 1809.

[1] *Castlereagh's Correspondence*, vi. 248 *et seq.* The Marquess of Londonderry, editor of these letters, observes in regard to some of the memoranda on the projected expedition that they must have been written before January 1809, because Sir John Moore, who was killed in that month, is referred to as the probable commander of the troops; but the reference to the expected co-operation of Russia (page 258) points to a much earlier date, anterior to the treaty of Tilsit (1807).

[2] "A man reputed to possess an excellent understanding, but whose very name was almost proverbial for enervation and indolence. . . . It was said that a hesitation and reluctance on the part of the Ministry to employ such a general was overcome by the influence of a lady of the Court." (*Annual Register*, 1809, p. 223.) The concluding reference appears to be to Queen Charlotte.

The expedition sailed on 28th and 29th July. Flushing was invested on 1st August, but so languidly were the siege works carried forward that the bombardment did not begin till the 13th. On the 15th General Monnet capitulated, and his garrison of 6000 became prisoners of war. Meanwhile the French forces in Belgium had concentrated for the defence of Antwerp; Strachan and Chatham disagreed about the plan of operations; further advance up the Scheldt was given up; half the troops were sent home in September, *Chatham requesting and obtaining leave to accompany them.* The rest of the army went into winter quarters for the permanent occupation of the dismal island of Walcheren; but fever broke out and wrought such frightful ravages as made it necessary to recall the whole force, and the island was finally evacuated on 23rd December.

Capitulation of Flushing, 15th Aug. 1809.

This Walcheren bungle brought to an angry head the difference between Canning and Castlereagh. Hitherto, it had seemed, no monarch could be better served by two Ministers so exactly the complement of each other. In gifts, natural or acquired, one contributed what the other lacked—Castlereagh repairing by suavity and tact such lesions as might be wrought by Canning's mordant wit and imperious temper—Canning masking with consummate speech the halting utterance of his colleague. Why should such a perfect arrangement have ceased to be? The answer comes from the unalterable nature of man.

From its first conception, Canning had disapproved of the expedition to Flushing; in fact, during the whole spring and summer he had been striving to procure the removal of Castlereagh from the War Office. Early in April he had informed the Duke of Portland that, unless the conduct of the war were put into the hands of another than Castlereagh, he, Canning, must ask leave to retire from the Cabinet. It does not appear that Canning actually wished to drive his colleague out of the Ministry; the War Office and Colonial Office were then administered by the same chief, and he might have been satisfied to see Castlereagh give up the

Canning's intrigue against Castlereagh, April–Sept. 1809.

one and retain the other.[1] At the same time, it must be remembered that the retirement of the Duke of Portland was considered imminent; that Castlereagh, as leader of the House of Commons, would have a superior claim to Canning for the first place in the Government, and that Canning had marked that place for himself.

The Duke asked for time to consult his other colleagues. Hearing nothing more of the matter, Canning wrote to Portland on 25th May, reiterating his intention to resign, whereupon the old Duke wrote in dismay to Lord Eldon: "If this cannot be prevented I see nothing but ruin to the country and to Europe, and so I told Canning most plainly and distinctly."[2] On 31st May Canning laid his resignation before the King, who, having of course been fully acquainted with the circumstances from the first, desired him to retain office until his Majesty should have considered the whole matter.

On 21st June, the day of the prorogation of Parliament, the Duke told Canning that the King had consented to a rearrangement of the duties of the War Office, and had commissioned Lord Camden to communicate this to Castlereagh. Six days later, Canning, learning that no such communication had been made, again tendered his resignation, and was informed that it was the King's pleasure that Lord Castlereagh should not be informed of the intended change until after the expedition to the Scheldt had sailed. A fortnight passed; once again Canning demanded either that the rearrangement of offices should be carried out or that he should be permitted to retire; once again he consented to the postponement of the whole matter until the result of the expedition should be known. All this time Lord Camden, the President of the Council, a connection by marriage and intimate friend of Castlereagh, had been in Portland's confidence, and the King had approved of

[1] Eldon, who disliked and distrusted Canning, wrote on 7th June to Portland: "The great object, and indeed the *sine qud non*, with Canning is to take from Lord Castlereagh the conduct of the war; and perhaps Canning may go so far as to wish that he may not keep the seals, but have some other Cabinet office. But if Lord Castlereagh gives up the War Department, I think Canning would be satisfied, for the present at least." (Twiss, i. 406.)

[2] Ibid., 405.

Castlereagh being informed by Camden of what was passing; but Portland, anxious to avoid a break-up of the Cabinet, and trusting that some great success in Holland would turn the edge of Canning's displeasure, exacted a promise from Camden to make no communication to Castlereagh. The Duke's hopes were dashed on 2nd September when it was announced in London that the enterprise against Antwerp had come to nought. Next day Canning wrote to the Prime Minister reminding him of all that had passed, and calling upon him to fulfil his agreement.

The Cabinet crisis, Sept. 1809.

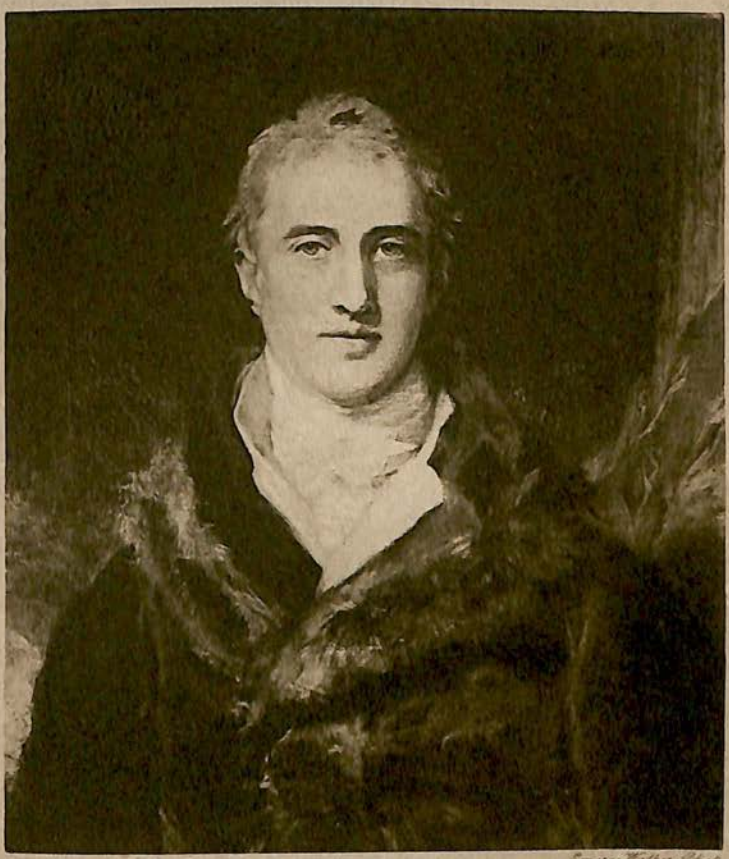
Now the Duke of Portland was seventy-one, riddled with gout and racked with gravel. Moreover, he was just recovering from a severe stroke of paralysis and was weary of the whole affair. He told Canning that he had made up his mind to retire; whereupon Canning instantly demanded that his own resignation should be laid before the King. Of course these resignations made it necessary to enlighten Lord Castlereagh upon their cause. He was thunderstruck; behind his back he had been pronounced, both by the King and his political chief, unfit for his office; he threw it up at once, and proceeded to deal with what he considered the treachery of his colleague. Canning had obtained a promise that he, Castlereagh, should be deprived of the War Office, and yet had acted "with him in the meantime as in full confidence, in matters of infinite delicacy;"[1] it was a fighting matter. Castlereagh, after making full inquiry into the transaction, felt that he had been deeply wronged, and sent Lord Yarmouth with a challenge to Canning. They met at Putney Heath at 7 A.M. on 21st September, Charles Rose Ellis[2] acting as Canning's second. Canning's bullet cut a button off the right breast of Castlereagh's coat, while Castlereagh's bullet found its billet in Canning's thigh; and so the honour of two Secretaries of State was satisfied.

Duel between Canning and Castlereagh, 21st Sept. 1809.

The pious Wilberforce was shocked, blaming Castlereagh's "Irish education and habits. *Manent vestigia ruris;*" but

[1] Lord Eldon to Sir William Scott.

[2] Created Lord Seaford in 1826.



Emery Walker. Phot.

Robert Stewart Viscount Castlereagh

From the painting by Sir Thomas Lawrence

LONDON EDWARD ARNOLD 1909

public opinion laid the blame on Canning, who, by-the-by, was an Irishman also. "I think," wrote Lord Eldon to his wife, "the individual who has occasioned all this mischief is Vanity in human form. Nothing will serve him but what he will never be permitted to be." Canning made public the fact that, from the first, he had urged that the action he had taken against Castlereagh should be made known to him; but then, people said, he had acquiesced in concealment and had continued to work for his rival's removal while treating him with a show of confidence. Castlereagh's suavity and agreeable presence had won him the favour of the House of Commons as its leader; even extreme members of the opposition—"the Mountain," as they were proud to be called—spoke kindly of him, and traced the quarrel to Canning's jealous ambition.[1] Men of Canning's own party recognised him as indispensable, but they neither loved nor trusted him.

The fact was pretty clear that Canning had far more in view than merely replacing Castlereagh at the War Office by Lord Wellesley. The Walcheren fiasco came opportunely to justify his view about the defects of that department; but above and beyond all that was the question who should succeed Portland as Prime Minister. The King himself had warned Ministers in August that they should look out for a new chief. Who should it be? If Castlereagh left the War Office without credit, even his position as leader of the House of Commons would hardly entitle him to look for the first place in the Government. There remained as likely aspirants Lord Liverpool, Lord Wellesley, and the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Mr. Perceval; but all these Canning dismissed from the running in a letter to the last named. He told Perceval that he had resolved to serve in no Cabinet the chief whereof was a peer, adding in plain terms that he considered himself better qualified for the post than Perceval.

Undoubtedly Canning was right. For one who in range and penetration of intellect, in force and quality of eloquence, so far excelled all those holding or aspiring to office, there was but one place possible, unless he had been

[1] *Creevey Papers*, i. 98, 99, 106, *et passim*.

endowed with the rare faculty of subordinating personal ambition to public welfare. The want of this faculty was Canning's chief defect, and proved the ultimate cause of his eclipse. There is no attribute which so surely attracts the confidence of colleagues and the public to a statesman as a reputation for disinterestedness, and to that Canning had for ever forfeited all title. Otherwise he must have succeeded Portland in a position where history would have ranked him as a minister with Pitt.

The two principal figures in the administration having followed its chief into retirement, the King was thrown into such perplexity and agitation as made men apprehend another attack of insanity.[1] The difficulty lay in the scantiness of material for a purely Tory cabinet—"We shall live for about a fortnight after Parliament meets," said Eldon[2]—and in the King's objection to have recourse to the party of emancipation for a coalition. Finally, on 23rd September his Majesty overcame his feelings and authorised Perceval to form a coalition government with the help of Lords Grey and Grenville. Both these lords declined, seeing that the bar to reopening the Roman Catholic question had not been removed; and Perceval, after an ineffectual attempt to secure the adherence of some of Lord Sidmouth's friends *without* their chief, completed a cabinet of ten Tories. Lord Liverpool succeeded Castlereagh at the War Office; Lord Wellesley followed Canning at the Foreign Office; the only cabinet ministers in the House of Commons being Perceval, Yorke, and Ryder. Nobody expected that the government would live a month, but the King let it be known that if his ministers were not properly supported he intended to dissolve the parliament; and the threat was effective.

The Perceval administration, Oct. 1809.

[1] Lord Eldon to his wife, 22nd Sept. (Twiss, i. 418). [2] Ibid.

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CHAPTER VII

Difficulties of the Government—Crusade against sinecures—Progress of the Peninsular War—The lines of Torres Vedras—Fall of Ciudad Rodrigo—The third French invasion of Portugal—British retreat upon Torres Vedras—Battle of Busaco—Retreat resumed—Masséna evacuates Portugal—Battle of Fuentes de Oñora—Battle of Albuera—Second abdication of King Joseph—Siege and storm of Ciudad Rodrigo—Siege and storm of Badajos—Battle of Salamanca—The allies enter Madrid—The retreat from Burgos—Napier's injustice to the British Cabinet—The campaign of Vittoria—Battle of Vittoria—Soult resumes the offensive—Sir John Murray's misconduct—Wellington invades France—Battle of the Nivelle—Battle of Toulouse.

WELLESLEY had managed to extricate himself handsomely from an almost desperate situation on the Tagus, and his success had been rewarded by a peerage and a pension of £2000 a year for three lives; but the parliamentary Opposition took full advantage of the material provided for bringing discredit on the Government. They delighted to exalt the prowess of the enemy and to cast reflections upon the youthful general commanding at the front, whereby they furnished Napoleon with his favourite reading throughout the war, for he was ever a diligent student of English journals. The verbal virulence of these debates no doubt misled him grievously as to the nature of the forces opposed to him; still, as a soldier, he must have been tickled when he read how Mr. Vernon, "in a maiden speech," laid down that "Lord Wellington might have learned more discretion from the experience of Sir John Moore's incursion into Spain."

Difficulties of Ministers. 1810.

On the whole, the Government came pretty well out of the debates on the Talavera campaign. They had the King at their back, and in front of them an Opposition distracted by intestine jealousies. James Abercromby, Tierney, Whitbread, and George Ponsonby each had pretensions to the leadership vacated by the removal of Lord Grey to the House of Lords. Each had his group

of partisans, and when ultimately the choice fell upon Ponsonby all the other cliques took dire umbrage.

Ministers did not fare so well over the Walcheren affair. First, on 26th January they suffered defeat upon Lord Porchester's motion for an inquiry by the House of Commons into the expedition to the Scheldt, Castlereagh, with whom lay the chief responsibility for the expedition, voting in support of the motion and against Ministers. But Canning, although well known to have disapproved of the whole plan from the first, had the generosity to speak eloquently in defence of his former colleagues, and to march with them to defeat in the lobbies. Again on 23rd February, and a third time on 2nd March, Ministers were in a minority; yet they carried on, not in virtue of the confidence of Parliament and the country (so grievously had that been shaken by the disclosures of the Walcheren inquiry), but because they were the only possible Government. The Opposition had fallen afresh to loggerheads over the Bill conferring a pension upon Lord Wellington. The extreme party—"the Mountain"—adopted the views of the Common Council of London, who petitioned the King not to award any distinction to the victor of Talavera for having exhibited, "with equal rashness and ostentation, nothing but a useless valour"; but the patriot Whigs took a very different line. "All our indignation against Wellington," writes the Radical Creevey, "ended in smoak. Opposition to his thanks was so unpopular, that some of the stoutest of our crew slunk away."[1]

The Radicals devised humorous revenge upon the dignified reserve of Lords Grey and Grenville. A mass meeting of the lowest of the populace was held in Palace Yard, where a petition was agreed to for parliamentary reform. It began, "Whereas by a petition presented in 1798 by Charles Grey, Esq., now Earl Grey," and was drawn in precisely the same terms as the former one. The sting of the joke was that the official Whigs had refused to move in the matter of parliamentary reform during the continuance of the war.

In the useful and practical crusade against sinecures

[1] *Creevey Papers*, i. 127.

both wings of the Opposition were united, and took advantage of the weakness of the Government to press for stricter control over public expenditure. For this there was crying need. From the third report of the Select Committee on Finance it appeared that, in spite of the reduction already effected by the abolition of sinecures, no less than £1,500,000 was still spent yearly in remuneration of such as remained. In previous sessions the House of Lords had repeatedly thrown out Bills sent up from the House of Commons prohibiting the grant of places and pensions in reversion; but the time was at hand when such opposition could not be maintained. The report of the Select Committee on Sinecure Places was presented in June, which, while carefully refraining from dealing with any appointments, however devoid of duties, connected in the remotest way with service of the royal family, scheduled salaries to the amount of £81,580 per annum for which no value whatever was received by the public, and recommended their abolition. These form a curious list, ranging from the Keeper of the Great Seal, who drew £2441 for doing nothing, down to the Surveyor of Green Wax in the Exchequer, who received £94 a year for doing no more. The dawn of political purity, inaugurated by Pitt, was broadening, but the light penetrated slowly into the murky labyrinth of peculation and costly favouritism which had grown up so thickly round the Court and the Cabinet.

Crusade against sinecures, 1810.

The tidings from the Spanish armies after Wellington's retreat to Badajos in September 1809 were of a tenour to test to the utmost both the courage of the new Ministers and confidence in their general. Instead of making use of the natural advantages of their country for defensive warfare, the Spanish generals continually sought to fight pitched battles, with the result that at Christmastide the only complete force left to them in the field was one of 13,000 men under the Duque de Albuquerque in Estremadura.

The British Government had been shorn at one stroke of the two Ministers mainly, one may say entirely, responsible for the Peninsular campaign; it is not surprising,

therefore, to mark a change of tone in the War Office correspondence with Wellington.[1] "How can you get your army safely away if the French advance against you?" was the keynote of Liverpool's letters, so soon as the peace with Austria and the treaty of Schönbrunn (20th October 1809) set Napoleon free to concentrate all his forces upon the war in the Peninsula. Wellington's replies were consistently calm and reassuring. "I believe I can hold my own against any force the French can bring against me. If I am forced out of the country, I shall bring the army away in safety."[2] In justice to Perceval and his colleagues, it must be said that they never contemplated abandoning Spain and Portugal to their fate; neither did Liverpool, as War Minister, construe evacuation of Portugal as synonymous with desertion of the Peninsula. He suggested a plan of embarking the army at Lisbon and conveying it round to Cadiz. Privately, to Mr. Stuart,[3] British Minister at Lisbon, Wellington confessed to feeling some irritation at the attempt to direct a campaign across a thousand miles of ocean.

Progress of the war, 1810.

> "It will not answer in these times to receive private hints and opinions from Ministers, which, if attended to, would lead to an act directly contrary to the spirit, and even the letter, of the public instructions; at the same time, if not attended to, the danger of the responsibility imposed by the public instructions is increased tenfold."[4]

What remains one of the most humiliating features of those years is the constant attempt of the extreme section of Opposition to inflict injury on the Government by hampering them in the conduct of the war. The chief military adviser of the Carlton House party was Lord Hutchinson, an experienced soldier, who had commanded the 1st Division under Abercromby in Egypt and succeeded to the chief command upon the death of that general. He did not hesitate to sink his patriotism in the spirit of faction.

Unpatriotic conduct of the Opposition, 1809–1810.

[1] See Wellington's *Despatches*, vols. v. and vi., *passim*.
[2] Ibid., v. 273, 275.
[3] Afterwards Lord Stuart de Rothesay.
[4] Ibid., vi. 48; 21st April 1810.

"Lord Hutchinson," writes Creevey on 23rd February, "thinks Wellington ought to be hanged. . . . In his last despatch he [Wellington] has written under the greatest possible fright, and has pressed the Government for positive instructions whether he is to come away or stay. Lord Hutchinson thinks that orders are gone for him to evacuate Portugal."[1]

The despatch referred to has been quoted above. Wellington's quiet assurance stiffened the resolve of Ministers, who asked in June for a vote of credit for three millions. Whitbread pointed scornfully to the barren results of Wellington's operations, the folly of accepting his favourable estimate of Portuguese auxiliaries, and the rashness of continuing to expose a small British force to the concentrated attack of Napoleon's enormous armies. But Canning, from the bench behind Ministers, supported them with equal fire and grace. Repelling the taunt that Talavera was a barren victory, he replied that it was "not unproductive, but as advantageous as brilliant, if we take into account that it immediately opened to us the gates of Cadiz," which the Spanish Junta had kept jealously closed until that victory had been won. "Cadiz is now occupied by British conjointly with Spanish troops. . . . While Cadiz is safe, Spain is not lost; and while all is not lost, all is ultimately retrievable." Noble, brave words to be nobly, bravely fulfilled; though many who heard and cheered them must have felt that the hope was forlorn.

The debate is well worth studying, were it only to show how factious opposition should be met. There were men on the Speaker's left individually as courageous and patriotic as any on his right, but they had opposed the war from the beginning, and now the spirit of party pricked them on to win a triumph over what seemed a tottering administration. Such conduct was their undoing. Carping criticism of the commander of the forces operating against prodigious odds—disparaging taunts against the army—perpetual censure of Ministers manfully pursuing their purpose: these evoked no response from the country, and drove the Grey and Grenville Whigs into inaction. Canning's trumpet

[1] *Creevey Papers*, i. 130.

note sounded far across the land. From hall and cabin, city and hamlet, English vale and Scottish glen, came back the same homely but hearty echo—"We must beat 'Boney'!"

Napoleon by this time had realised what he had taken in hand in Spain. "Il parait que c'est un homme, ce Wellesley," was his comment on Talavera. But, although Austria had been cowed down, he found it impossible to take the field in person. He was doubly occupied in the divorce of his Empress Josephine and his betrothal to the Archduchess Maria Louisa of Austria. Therefore he committed the task of driving the English into the sea to the marshal he esteemed the best—Masséna, Prince of Essling, *l'enfant chéri de la victoire*, to whom he committed 100,000 troops released from service in Germany.

On the approach of this most famous marshal, Wellington broke up from Badajos on 15th January, withdrew across the Tagus, and established his headquarters on Portuguese soil at Viseu. His strength was about 23,000 British, besides 30,000 Portuguese under Marshal Beresford. The secret of his confidence had been well kept; the hour was at hand when it should be disclosed with dramatic effect.

The English press, mischievously nimble in picking up and publishing every piece of military intelligence, regardless of the advantage conferred upon the enemy,[1] had taken no notice of the diligence of thousands of spades, which, directed by Colonel Richard Fletcher of the Engineers, had been transforming the entire tongue of land whereon Lisbon is built into a vast fortress covering about 500 square miles of ground. Napoleon's system of military espionage was very effective; but the very magnitude of Wellington's design baffled the understanding of his agents. Three lines of fortification were drawn from side to side of the promontory, the outermost consisting of a line of redoubts connected by scarps cut in

The lines of Torres Vedras.

[1] In 1811 Berthier wrote to Masséna: "We are perfectly informed by the English; much better than you are. The Emperor reads the London journals, and every day a number of letters by the Opposition, whereof some accuse Lord Wellington and discuss your operations in detail."

the brow of a range of hills for a distance of seven-and-twenty miles. The second line, six to eight miles in rear of the first, was similar, and measured four-and-twenty miles in length. The third line, twenty-four miles behind the second, was but 3000 yards long, and was planned to cover a forced embarkation, should the need arise.

Not a word about this mighty work did its designer breathe either to his officers or to the Secretary of State, so determined was he that no premature hint of the secret should get abroad.

"I think I am in such a position," he wrote on 10th February to his Adjutant-General Lord Charles Stewart,[1] who was at home on leave, "that I can retire and embark when I please; and if that be the case, I cannot but feel that the longer I stay the better for the cause and the more honourable for the country. . . . I should be able to effect my object with greater ease, if I was not under the necessity of effecting everything, not only without loss, but without risk, or even the appearance of risk, in order to please the good people who make themselves judges of these matters in England."[2]

Well may a lover of his country tremble as he reflects how much nearer modern science has brought "the good people" to the seat of war, wherever it may be. Looking back across the years, how clearly there stands out from the dimness the imperishable certainty that upon this retreat to Torres Vedras hinged the whole of the Peninsular campaign—the fate of Europe—the destiny of England; and the question presents itself irresistibly: "Would any general have the hardihood to undertake the like now, with machines in every London club clicking out sensational accounts of every incident the moment it occurred? Would Parliament have the moral courage to support such a general?" Remembering the emotions that were stirred by the burning of a few Boer farmsteads in the African campaign of 1899, one may speculate what would be the effect upon our nerves of such operations as Wellington's in 1810. They were of the same nature as those of Robert

[1] Afterwards 3rd Marquess of Londonderry.
[2] Original at Wynyard Park.

the Bruce in the Scottish war of independence; the only operations whereby a numerically inferior force can make the invader's position intolerable—namely, the conversion of fertile land into desert.

Exercising his power as Marshal-General of Portugal, Wellington first called to arms the whole male population of the kingdom; next he issued a proclamation requiring that, upon the advance of the French army, every kind of property that could not be removed should be destroyed; lastly, he ordered the whole population in the line of march to retire within the lines of Torres Vedras. Suffering, hardship, sacrifice of property, were the inevitable consequences of such strategy as this; but there was another circumstance which it would have been even harder to justify, had it been known in England. Early in June Masséna laid siege to Ciudad Rodrigo. Wellington had his headquarters at Almeida, close to the frontier; Craufurd's Light Division, holding an advanced post on the Coa, were within hearing of the siege guns; their outposts could actually distinguish the musketry fire. The brave Marquis Romana passionately demanded that Wellington should co-operate in relieving the fortress; Herrasti, commanding the beleaguered garrison, sent heart-rending appeals for succour; Masséna issued proclamations, taunting the Spaniards about their craven allies; Spanish officials cursed the cold Englishman, and broke off all communication with him. It was a situation which, above all others, lashes the impatience of the non-combatant public, and tries to the utmost the firmness of a commander responsible for an army. Wellington proved equal to the trial. Deaf alike to the prayers and curses of his allies, and to the murmurs ("croaking" he called it) of his own officers, he declined to move a single brigade to Herrasti's relief. "I have been most anxiously desirous to relieve this place since it has been attacked; and have been prevented . . . only by the certainty which I had that the attempt must fail, and that the immediate fall of the place and the irrevocable loss of the cause of the Allies would be the consequence of the failure."[1]

Fall of Ciudad Rodrigo, 10th July 1810.

[1] Lord Wellington to Lord Liverpool, 11th July 1810.

Ciudad Rodrigo fell on 10th July; on the 24th Marshal Ney drove Craufurd from his position on the Coa, and crossed the frontier. On 15th August he invested Almeida, the British retiring before him to Celorico. Almeida capitulated on the 27th, and now the Portuguese Regency abandoned all faith in Wellington. Principal Souza, a fiery and most indiscreet patriot, denounced him to the populace as having betrayed Ciudad Rodrigo and Almeida, and as designing the speedy embarkation of his army and the desertion of Portugal. The situation became dangerous, but Wellington proceeded calmly with his fixed plan.

The third French invasion of Portugal, 24th July 1810.

On 16th September Masséna advanced from Almeida, with a strength of 72,000, the allies falling back before him.[1] Wellington would have preferred to retire steadily upon his fortified lines; but soldiers are not mere pawns on a board; something was wanted to counteract the depressing effects of prolonged retreat, not to mention the British and Portuguese public, whom it was well to keep in good humour. On the ridge of Busaco, therefore, he determined to give battle, and here, on the morning of 27th September, he received the French attack. This was delivered in the usual way, five heavy columns advancing against the British line, which extended about five miles from flank to flank, practically hidden from the assailing force by the comb of the ridge. Never did the superb French infantry make a finer display of their quality; cavalry was out of the question upon such steep ground. One of Regnier's three columns on the French left stormed the height, throwing Picton's 3rd Division into confusion, and established itself across the broken British line. General Leith promptly moved the 5th Division to Picton's support, hurled the French down the steep, and the danger, so imminent, was repaired. On the French right, Ney's two divisions met with similar repulse. Here also one of the columns succeeded in topping the ridge, but Craufurd's Light Division made short work of it. Masséna, deciding that the position of the allies was

Retreat upon Torres Vedras, 16th Sept. 1810.

Battle of Busaco, 27th Sept. 1810.

[1] Their strength was 47,800, about half being British troops.

impregnable, did not renew the attack. The action was over by two o'clock, when the French resumed their position of the morning, having lost between 4000 and 5000 killed and wounded. The loss of the allies amounted to not more than 1300.

On the 29th Wellington resumed the retreat, desiring above all things to draw his enemy in pursuit, although that enemy was still his superior in strength by 12,000 or 14,000 men. Rearguard actions and affairs of outposts marked the course of every day; the whole population swarmed terror-stricken on the line of march, abandoning the ungathered vintage, seeking protection from the enemy they had so much reason to dread, and crowding the highway to the capital. "By no one who bore a part in that memorable retreat can it ever be forgotten. Other scenes may fade in the change of succeeding years, or perish utterly from the memory—the impression of this can only be effaced by death."[1]

The retreat resumed, 29th Sept. 1810.

On the 9th October the allied army began entering the lines and manning the works of Torres Vedras; nor was it until late on the 10th, when General Clausel drove some troops of the British 1st Division out of Sobral, that Masséna became aware of the existence in his front of fifty miles of fortification mounting many hundreds of guns. Let it stand to the eternal honour of the Portuguese nation that during all these months, when ruin seemed to impend over the country and all therein who had anything to lose, not a man had purchased his own safety by selling the secret to the French.

Secure behind the formidable lines of Torres Vedras, well supplied with provisions from the British fleet, the allies lay nearly five weeks awaiting attack. But Masséna had tasted the quality of Wellington's infantry in the open at Busaco; he realised the hopelessness of attacking them behind entrenchments; death, desertion, and disease had reduced his army to about 50,000, and daily the difficulty of subsistence became greater. On 14th November he broke up and retired upon Santarem and Thomar; he sent urgent appeals to Napoleon for reinforcements; but Napoleon,

[1] *Annals of the Peninsular Campaign*, by T. Hamilton, 29th Regiment.

already preparing for the invasion of Russia, had no troops to spare for the Peninsula, and sent orders to King Joseph and Marshal Soult to go to Masséna's support. Early in March 1811, therefore, Masséna made up his mind to evacuate Portugal. He quarrelled with Ney, whom he removed from his command. Closely pressed by the allies, he managed to avoid more than partial encounters, until, on 7th April, for the third and last time the French eagles were driven across the frontier, leaving only the garrison of Almeida on Portuguese soil. Wellington having invested that place, Masséna, after being reinforced at Salamanca, returned for the purpose of relieving it, and gave battle to the allies at Fuentes de Oñoro on 3rd and 5th May. It was an exceedingly critical affair; Wellington's position was very faulty and dangerously extended; he was obliged to re-form his entire right wing upon a new front in presence of Montbrun's 5000 cavalry, with artillery. "There was not," says Napier, "during the war a more dangerous hour for England." In a private letter to his brother, Wellington admitted that "if Bony had been there we should have been beaten."[1] Fuentes de Oñoro must be counted a drawn battle, each army occupying nearly its original ground on the evening of the second day. After holding his position unchallenged for two days, Masséna beat a retreat; wherefore Napoleon recalled him in disgrace, and gave command of the Army of Portugal to Marmont, Duc de Raguse.

The French evacuate Portugal, 7th April 1811.

Battle of Fuentes de Oñoro, 3rd and 5th May 1811.

Meanwhile Soult, having reluctantly quitted Andalusia in obedience to Napoleon's command, fell in with Marshal Beresford, whom Wellington had detached with 22,000 men on 16th March to operate on the Guadiana. Beresford had invested Badajos, but on the approach of Soult he raised the siege on 13th May, and took up a position about the village of Albuera. Having been reinforced by the Spanish corps of Blake and Ballasteros, he was attacked by the French on the 16th amid a deluge of rain. The presence of the Spanish troops

Battle of Albuera, 16th May 1811.

[1] Wellington's *Supplementary Despatches*, vii. 176. The casualties of the allies were returned at 1366; those of the French at 2665.

nearly brought about irretrievable disaster, owing to their inability to manœuvre. Here, as at Fuentes de Oñoro, the critical operation of changing front in presence of the enemy well-nigh wrecked the fortunes of the allies. "The Spanish troops behaved with the utmost gallantry, but it was hopeless to think of handling them."[1] Beresford managed to hold his ground, but at deplorable cost, his casualties amounting to not less than 7000. The French also remained in position that night and all next day; but on the 18th they retired to Solano. An event had taken place in the capital which gravely compromised Napoleon's authority in Spain. King Joseph, weary of the ceaseless wrangling of the marshals and discontented with the Emperor's refusal of further subsidy, performed an act of abdication and quitted Madrid for the second time in his troubled reign. His loss as a monarch might have been sustained with equanimity, but he was also a Marshal of France, and his flight left the Army of the Centre without a head at the very moment when Soult stood most in need of its support. This unexpected event threw the plans of the French into confusion and gave a desultory character to the rest of that season's campaign. Badajos was reinvested by Wellington on 25th May; the siege was raised for the second time on 12th June, because of the concentration in Estremadura of 60,000 troops under Soult and Marmont; partial engagements between detachments were frequent until the end of June, when the two rival marshals disagreed between themselves, and once more Estremadura was evacuated by the French. The winter found Wellington blockading Ciudad Rodrigo, with the main body of his army in cantonments in the valleys of the Coa, the Douro, and the Mondego. On 1st October 1811 the French armies in Spain amounted to 364,000 men; but during the winter months Napoleon withdrew many of his best troops for the war with Russia, only partly replacing them with fresh conscripts, so that the official returns on 15th April 1812 show only 291,300 of all arms; while Wellington had in the field and in hospital

Second abdication of King Joseph, May 1811.

[1] Wellington's *Despatches*, viii. 487.

46,000 British and 28,000 Portuguese soldiers; and there were besides 6000 British in garrison at Cadiz. Before that date, however, two fresh names had been added to the British roll of victory. All winter the troops had been kept busy making gabions and fascines, while siege material was being silently accumulated at Almeida, none knew for what purpose, until on 1st January Wellington marched with 35,000 troops, and laid siege to Ciudad Rodrigo on the 8th. Marmont, little expecting any movement of the allies in the bitter weather that prevailed, had left a garrison of but 1800 in that fortress. The siege was pressed; Wellington expecting daily to be forced to raise it by the approach of Marmont or Drouet, and on the night of 19th January the place was taken by storm. Fifteen hundred prisoners, 150 cannon, and much ammunition were among the spoil; but among their losses the British had to mourn the fiery and chivalrous Craufurd, commanding the famed Light Division.

Siege and storm of Ciudad Rodrigo, 8th–19th Jan. 1812.

From this point may be traced the effect, so fatal to French arms in the Peninsula, of Napoleon's wild enterprise against Russia. He had scolded his brother Joseph back to his uneasy throne at Madrid, reappointing him to general control of the campaign, yet interfering incessantly by instructions forwarded direct from Paris to the various marshals nominally subordinate to Joseph. Lightly do Napoleon's panegyrists condone his laches at this period. Dazzled by the spectacle of a single human being directing the movements of half a million of soldiers into the heart of Russia, controlling the operations of 300,000 more in Spain, and administering at the same time the internal affairs of a vast empire, they abate none of their eulogy by reason of the total failure of the attempt, nor impute blame to their idol for the incalculable misery he brought upon his fellow-creatures.

Wellington took instant advantage of the respite afforded him by the confusion prevailing among the French marshals. Having repaired the defences of Ciudad Rodrigo, he handed that fortress over to the Spanish Cortes, and pushed forward to besiege Badajos. Ground

was broken before it on 17th March; but it seemed scarcely credible that no attempt should be made to relieve a place commanding the whole southern frontier of Estremadura. Marmont lay at Salamanca; Soult tarried at Seville till 1st April, and on the 5th was still at Llerena, three marches from Badajos; the siege-works were carried on without interruption till the breaches were reported practicable, and Wellington gave orders for assault on the night of the 6th. On the morning of the 7th the British flag floated over the citadel, and all around—on the glacis, in the ditches, on the breached ramparts, and in the streets—lay ghastly evidence of the fury of the storm and the superb stubbornness of the defence. The attacking columns had lost in killed and wounded more than one man in every four—nearly 5000 out of 18,000. Space will not serve to dwell on the glory of the storm; less reason, therefore, to comment on the horrors of the sack which followed. For forty-eight hours the place was turned into a hell, wherein, inflamed by plentiful drink, the British soldiers indemnified themselves for past sufferings by nameless excesses and shameful violence. Such was the traditional custom of war in towns taken by storm.

Siege and storm of Badajos, 17th March–6th April 1812.

Wellington has had many critics and detractors among men of the profession of arms; his grateful country may afford them the freest exercise of their office, yet demur when his most salient successes are explained as the result of chance. The capture of these two frontier fortresses, whereby the whole future course of the war was profoundly modified, has been set down as an instance of "Wellington's luck." Had Marmont, it has been said, obeyed Napoleon's instructions—had Soult been more prompt in combination with his colleague—the siege of Badajos must have been raised. Quite so; but no man understood so well as Wellington the agencies at work to hinder the movements of these marshals, or was so quick to turn his understanding of them to advantage. He knew the exceeding difficulty which the French commanders experienced, at all seasons except the harvest, but especially in the hungry spring months, in keeping an army concentrated amid a fiercely

hostile population. He made the scarcity of supplies among the French just as much a factor in his calculations as the number of his own sabres and bayonets. Moreover, those who set down Wellington's victories to luck take no account of the degree in which he was both hampered in winning them and robbed of their legitimate fruit by the disorganisation, civil and military, prevailing in Spain. "If Ciudad Rodrigo," he wrote to the Secretary of State, "had been provisioned, as I had a right to expect, there was nothing to prevent me from marching to Seville at the head of 40,000 men, the moment the siege of Badajos was concluded."[1] But such foresight on the part of the Spanish authorities was more than could be hoped for. Ciudad Rodrigo was left without supplies; Wellington was compelled to remain in the north, keeping Marmont under observation; while Soult withdrew unmolested into Andalusia, to renew the blockade of Cadiz. And now the British general's combinations were all thrown out by Lord William Bentinck, who, it had been arranged, was to have landed 16,000 troops from Sicily in Catalonia, but who had altered the destination of that force to Italy. It was the old vice of isolated diversions over again. "Lord William's decision," wrote Wellington to his brother, Sir H. Wellesley,[2] "is fatal to the campaign, at least at present. If he should land *anywhere* in Italy, he will, as usual, be obliged to re-embark, and we shall have lost a golden opportunity here."

For the third time the British army prepared to retire upon its base in Portugal, Marmont manœuvring to intercept it. Like practised swordsmen, the two generals moved round each other for three weeks, until at last, on 22nd July, Marmont, having gained a favourable position, attacked the allies before Salamanca. The action began between three and four in the afternoon. Under cover of a heavy cannonade from his right, the French marshal detached his left wing under General Thomières, so as to command his enemy's line of retreat to the frontier. It was

Battle of Salamanca, 22nd July 1812.

[1] Wellington's *Despatches*, ix. 57.

[2] Created Lord Cowley in 1828.

an error; and it was not well to commit errors under Wellington's eye. The 3rd British Division, under Edward Pakenham, moved off under cover of the hill to outflank and intercept Thomières, which it did effectively. Thomières was taken *en flagrant délit;* his column overthrown, he himself perishing in the onslaught.

The remainder of Marmont's line was thrown into confusion and quitted the ground, covered by the divisions of Foy and Maucune, which behaved with perfect steadiness. The pursuit continued far into the night; the disobedience of Don Carlos, who had been commissioned to hold the bridge at Alba de Tormes, but had withdrawn his garrison, alone enabling the French to escape across the Tormes to Peñeranda. Still, Marmont suffered a crushing defeat; he lost 11 guns, 2 eagles, 6 stand of colours, and 7000 prisoners, including one general and 136 other officers. Three French generals were among the killed, Marmont and other three generals among the wounded. In his despatch to Berthier, Marmont had to admit the loss of 6000 men, besides the prisoners. On the other hand, the loss of the allies in killed, wounded, and missing was not less than 5225.

Napoleon raved against his unlucky marshal from the heart of Russia, and the unhappy Joseph, distracted by the insubordination of his generals, wrote in despair to the French minister of war: "If the Emperor cannot find means to compel the generals of the armies of the North, of Aragon, and of the South to obey me, Spain is lost, and the French army with it."

No question now of retiring upon Portugal. Wellington, pressing hard upon Clausel's corps, occupied Valladolid on 30th July, capturing 17 guns. King Joseph fled from Madrid, and on 12th August the allies entered the capital, capturing a French garrison of 2000 in the Retiro, which contained 180 guns and 20,000 stand of arms. This marked the turning-point of the season's campaign. In the first week of September Wellington marched north with four of his six divisions and invested Burgos; but, being badly supplied with heavy artillery, he could make no adequate im-

The allies enter Madrid, 12th Aug. 1812.

pression upon that fortress; and although the siege was maintained till 21st October, it was then raised on the approach of Souham with the reorganised Army of Portugal, 35,000 strong.

Back to Portugal once more! The retreat along the valley of the Douro brought Wellington nearer to disaster than he was at any time during his whole career. Incessant rain and rough weather combined with the dreary discontent engendered by retreat to break the habits of discipline. Hundreds of soldiers, straggling and plundering, fell into the enemy's hands; rearguard actions and skirmishes were of daily occurrence, for Souham had been joined in the pursuit by Soult and King Joseph, making up a total force of about 92,000, with 120 guns. On 3rd November Wellington effected a junction with Hill's corps on the Adaja, bringing up the allied strength to 64,000 men, with 70 guns; and thus, he wrote to Charles Stewart, "I have got clear in a handsome manner of the worst scrape I ever was in." Had Souham pressed "the leopards" more closely in their retreat, the difficulties of the allies might have been turned into disaster; but, as Wellington grimly observed afterwards, "the French had found that our bullets were not made of butter." As it was, the losses of the army in action, by straggling, disease, and desertion, added to those incurred under the walls of Burgos, cannot be set down lower than 9000 or 10,000 men.

The retreat from Burgos, 21st Oct.–17th Nov. 1812.

Napier, as was irresistible to so ardent a Whig, laid the whole blame for the failure of the siege of Burgos upon British Ministers, and their "usual vicious manner of doing business," and quoted with approval Lord Wellesley's denunciation of "the imbecile administration of Mr. Perceval and his coadjutors."[1] He devoted many pages to explaining how "incapable the Cabinet was of making the simplest arrangements, neglecting the most obvious means of supplying the wants of the army." Blinded by party prejudice and the usual contempt felt by soldiers for civil administrators, Napier penned these paragraphs in flagrant disregard

Napier's injustice to the British Cabinet.

[1] *Peninsular War*, v. 385.

of Wellington's own explanation to the Secretary of State:—

"There were ample means both at Madrid and Santander for the siege of the strongest fortress. That which was wanting in both places was means of transporting ordnance and military stores. . . . The people of England, so happy as they are in every respect, so rich in resources . . . having the use of such excellent roads, will not readily believe that important results here frequently depend upon fifty or sixty mules, more or less, or a few bundles of straw to feed them. . . . I could not find means of moving even one gun from Madrid."[1]

Before Wellington took the field for his sixth season's campaign in the Peninsula, the European situation had undergone a great change. Of that vast array which Napoleon had led across the Russian frontier on Midsummer Day 1813, 125,000 officers and men had fallen in battle, 193,000 had died or gone into captivity. The military resources of France could yield no more, and the pressure upon the British army was less severe. Wellington, appointed at last Spanish generalissimo, had 200,000 allied troops at his disposal, including 16,000 British and Sicilians under Sir John Murray at Alicante. King Joseph's armies reached a total of 231,500, including nearly 30,000 cavalry;[2] but the dispute with Soult had grown to a head. Joseph informed Napoleon that one or other of them must quit the country; wherefore Soult was recalled, and put in command of the Imperial Guard in Germany.

The campaign of Vittoria, 1813.

On 22nd May 1813 Wellington broke up from Treneda and bade a last farewell to Portugal. Hitherto his advance into Spain had always been by routes along the south bank of the Douro, or north bank of the Tagus, and the French had spent the winter strengthening the natural features that lay in either of those lines of march. This time he detached six divisions, forming the left wing of his army, under Sir Thomas Graham,[3] to cross the Douro into Tras-os-montes and to march through that province to Valladolid, thus turning

[1] Wellington's *Despatches*, ix. 566.
[2] *Imperial Muster Rolls*; quoted by Napier, v. 618.
[3] Created Lord Lynedoch in 1814.

the French position. On 3rd June the whole allied army was concentrated at Toro, having carried almost without bloodshed the line of the Douro which the French had spent so much labour in fortifying. The army of Portugal fell back before the advance of the allies; who, albeit 90,000 strong with 100 guns, might have had terrible work if Masséna or Clausel had been on their front, so splendidly was the country fitted for defensive war. As it was, King Joseph hastily bundled up all the pictures and plate he could lay hands on, quitted his capital for the last time, and stood at bay upon the high land beyond the Zadora, covering the town of Vittoria. The French line presented two fronts, Reille commanding the army of Portugal on the right, facing the north. At right angles to Reille's alignment, but seven miles to the south thereof, stood the Army of the Centre under King Joseph, facing west; while General Gazan with the Army of the South prolonged the line to the left. The numbers of the whole French force on the ground have been estimated at 60,000 of all arms.[1] Against these Wellington was able to bring 66,000 British and Portuguese (under British officers the Portuguese were now as effective as their allies), and upwards of 20,000 Spaniards, whom steady discipline and instruction were rapidly developing into splendid fighting material. For the first time, therefore, since the combat of Roliça in 1808, Wellington was able to bring into action a force numerically superior to the enemy.

Battle of Vittoria, 21st June 1813.

The issue to be fought out was tremendous. On the one hand, defeat meant to Joseph headlong expulsion from his realm, and the final loss of Spain to France, through severance of the lines of communication between the French base at Bayonne by way of Madrid to Seville. On the other hand, Wellington, who in leaving Lisbon, his base of arms and supplies, four hundred and fifty miles in his rear, had overruled the opinion of all his generals and staff, including the gallant Graham, the sagacious Hill, and the unswerving George Murray—Wellington, I say, had been apprized of Napoleon's victories at Lutzen (2nd May),

[1] Napier's *Peninsular War*, v. 552. Wellington estimated the French strength at between 70,000 and 80,000 (Stanhope's *Conversations*, p. 47).

Bautzen (20th May), and Hochkirchen (22nd May), and the consequent armistice between him and the allies at Plesswig on 4th June, all portending early reinforcement of the armies in Spain. He knew that there must be limits to the patience and confidence of people at home, limits which assuredly would be touched and broken by a fifth retreat before the eagles of France. The decisive hour in six continuous years of war had struck; the fate of France—of England—of Europe was in the balance.

In the drizzling dawn of 21st June the camp of the allies on the Bayas poured forth three columns, which began threading their separate courses through the ravines and ridges separating the valley of that river from the channel of the Zadora. It was high noon before the heads of these columns began to deploy before the French position. Rowland Hill led off the attack at midday on the British right, carrying the heights of la Puebla and turning the enemy's left. Wellington, in the centre, forced the passage of the Zadora with the 4th and Light Divisions, supported by the 3rd and 7th, driving King Joseph's columns slowly before them along the highway to Vittoria. Reille, on the French right, made a stiffer stand against Sir Thomas Graham's attack, maintaining his ground till evening, when, owing to his front being *en potence* to the rest of the French line, he found his left flank and rear exposed. He drew back in good order as far as Metanco, where his columns were dissolved in the general ruin and flight of Joseph's army.

It was a total rout. Of one hundred and fifty-two guns which the French had brought upon the field, they carried away but two in their flight;[1] enormous stores of ammunition, Marshal Jourdan's baton, the military chest containing about a million sterling in specie, the whole baggage of the army, and vast piles of plate, pictures, and other plunder of Spanish churches and palaces, fell into the hands of the conquerors. "I have taken more guns from these fellows," wrote Wellington, in terms as near a vaunt as he ever employed, "than I took at Assaye, without much more loss upon about 70,000 men engaged. . . . They cannot stand

[1] Even these two were taken three days later in a skirmish at Salvatierra.

us at all now."[1] The losses of the allies in this action were almost insignificant compared with the result achieved—33 officers killed and 230 wounded, 707 soldiers killed and 4210 wounded and missing—in all, 5280 casualties, or about 7 per cent. of the troops engaged.

In spite of this overwhelming victory, there was heavy work before the allies for some months to come. There is no more convincing proof of the superb military qualities of the French nation than their recuperative power. Napoleon had sent Soult to take over the wreck of King Joseph's armies. On 24th July, a month after the battle of Vittoria, he was on the frontier with 77,000 men, forced the passes of Maya and Roncevalles on the 25th, fought actions at Sorauren on the 27th, 28th, and 30th, and was driven back across the frontier on 2nd August. The fortress of San Sebastian, invested by Graham early in July, held out till 8th September; Pamplona did not fall till 31st October. By that time the only French force remaining in the whole Peninsula was Suchet's Army of the South, operating on the east coast.

Soult resumes the offensive, 24th July 1813.

Sir John Murray had invested Taragona on 2nd June with 16,000 men, displaying a sad want of vigour and sagacity in the siege. On the 11th the breaches were reported practicable; at ten o'clock that night the storming party lay waiting for the signal of assault, when Murray, alarmed at the rumour of Suchet's approach with 20,000 men, counter-ordered the assault. To the disgust of his staff and the other officers of his force, British and Spanish, he ordered his siege guns to be spiked and their carriages burnt, embarked his whole force on the 12th and 13th, and sailed away under a cloud of disgrace, which acquittal by a court-martial, held twenty months later, when the war was over, was powerless to dispel. Had he been tried at the time, when the evidence of Spanish officers could have been heard, it was the general opinion that he could not have escaped a capital sentence.

The indefatigable Soult took up a double line of

[1] The Achilles statue in Hyde Park was cast from the metal of some of these guns.

entrenched positions, barring the route to Bayonne. On 7th October Wellington entered French territory, crossing the Bidassoa at its estuary, and driving Reille's corps pell-mell towards Bayonne. Lord William Bentinck, who had superseded the luckless Murray, kept Suchet employed in Catalonia, so that Soult looked in vain for help from that quarter. Neither was Soult's master in a position to send succour, for the disasters of Grossbeeren (August 23rd), Katsbach (26th), Hagelburg (27th), Kulm (30th), and Dennewitz (September 6th) had brought about the dissolution of the Rhine Confederation. The gigantic system was crumbling to pieces; Russia, Austria, and Prussia, subsidised by English gold, were closing upon the vitals of the short-lived empire.

Wellington invades France, 7th Oct. 1813.

Wellington, a practised foxhunter, knew how to press a sinking fox. With well-seasoned troops, such as, he proudly said afterwards, "could go anywhere and do anything," he could afford to postpone the conventional precaution of taking up winter quarters. Through driving snow and biting frost, stooping cloud and raging wind, he held his ground along the foothills of the Pyrenees; until, on 10th November, he hurled 74,000 sabres and bayonets against the French defences, and added the name of Nivelle to the long roll of British victories. His task was nearly accomplished. Napoleon had been driven across the Rhine on 1st November, and the last scenes of the drama were being enacted upon the sacred soil of France.

Battle of the Nivelle, 10th Nov. 1813.

Yet the dauntless Soult still kept the field, dangerous to the last. Disputing the passage of the Nive from 9th to 13th December, his lieutenants, Clausel and Reille, came very near inflicting a reverse upon the allies, who lost 5000 killed and wounded. Then came a couple of months' respite to both armies, active operations being resumed on Valentine's Day 1814. Soult effected a concentration at Orthes, where on 27th February he endured a bloody defeat, and the people of Bordeaux, seeing the wind set in a fresh quarter, threw off the tricolor and did on the white cockade of the Bourbons.

All unknown to the allies, Paris capitulated on 31st

March; Napoleon's abdication quickly followed (5th April); there was no cause for further bloodshed. But official news travelled leaden-foot in those days. It cost the allies upwards of 4000 men to dislodge Soult from the heights above Toulouse on 10th April; and on the 14th Sir John Hope, who was besieging Bayonne, lost 843 officers and men in resisting a sortie, and was himself wounded and taken prisoner, with two of his staff.

Battle of Toulouse, 10th April 1804.

Thus slowly, and as it were reluctantly, the curtain was lowered upon the great drama of the Peninsular war. It is a favourite and perhaps not an unprofitable task for the student of strategy, secure in the bland atmosphere of his study, to demonstrate how faulty were many of the moves in that mighty game; how impossible it would have been for the insignificant British force to hold its own against the inexhaustible resources of France and her dependencies, had Napoleon not suffered his ambition to run away with him; how, if this marshal had supported that other at the proper moment, Wellington must have reaped the reward of the obstinate and headstrong. The historian, although not debarred from speculative excursion into what might have been, bases his narrative upon facts as they were. In the long-drawn conflict of the Peninsula, he recognises the execution of a bold design, deliberately conceived, inflexibly pursued, adapted to every phase of circumstance; and he stints nothing in the meed due to him who planned the work and carried it to a triumphant end. Wellington was more than a mere instrument; he inspired his countrymen and sustained their spirit; bending the most unpromising material to his purpose, he never suffered the resolution of his employers to fail, though he never concealed from them the urgency of any occasion. He won their implicit confidence as much by unvarying truthfulness as by prowess in the field.

It is a simple matter to count the flaws in the pedestal of Genius; to apprehend what that pedestal supports calls for faculties of a different order. The fastidious eye misses grace in the massive, sometimes rugged, outlines. Those who served under Wellington bore him none of that personal

affection which Moore won from men of all ranks; none of that blind belief in his destiny which bound millions to the feet of Napoleon; but they never distrusted him as a leader. His rule was harsh—at times it seemed heartless—yet "we would rather see his long nose in the fight than a reinforcement of ten thousand men any day."[1] It is no disparagement to Moore, one of the most accomplished soldiers and considerate commanders that ever buckled on a sword, to pronounce him incapable of the grasp of circumstance and the fell singleness of purpose displayed by Wellington; but human nature acts within inexorable limitations. The mind that planned combinations and timed marches to accord with the rise and fall of European nationalities, shed from itself many of those graces which attract popularity.

"Serpens, sitis, ardor, arenæ—
Dulcia virtuti."

Wellington was not yet five-and-forty when he brought his six years of campaign in the Peninsula to a triumphant close. The technical part of war has greatly changed its character in the past century; but for a belligerent Government the chief moral of the Peninsular campaign remains unchanged, namely—put your ablest commander at the head of your army, give him your confidence, a free hand and all that he asks for. It will be shown hereafter how heavy was the penalty exacted in the Crimean campaign for neglect of this lesson.

[1] Kincaid's *Adventures in the Rifle Brigade*, p. 74.

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CHAPTER VIII

Revival of British prosperity—The Regency—The Prince Regent sends for Lord Grenville—He retains the Perceval Ministry—Lord Wellesley's hostility to Perceval—The Prince Regent's overtures to the Whigs—Assassination of Mr. Perceval—Ministerial crisis—Lord Liverpool's Administration—Dissolution of Parliament—Revocation of the Orders in Council—The Orders in Council—The rights of search and impressment—Affair of the *Shannon* and the *Chesapeake*—The United States declare war against Great Britain—Napoleon's third attempt to negotiate peace—The American War—The Peninsular army broken up—Suppression of the slave trade—The Congress of Vienna—The Hundred Days—Napoleon invades Belgium—The Duke of Wellington is surprised—The battles of Ligny and Quatre-bras—Battle of Waterloo—The Convention of Paris.

DESPITE the burden of war taxes, Great Britain was steadily increasing in wealth. The Milan and Berlin decrees, designed to wither up her commerce, were neutralised by a general system of smuggling, which the French, having lost their sea-power, could do little to check. In the first ten years of the century British exports well-nigh doubled in value; the output of manufactured cotton in Lancashire had increased 100 per cent. in volume.

General prosperity in Great Britain, 1811.

The appointment of a Select Committee to inquire into the state of commercial credit, and the advance, in consequence of their report, of six millions of public money for the relief of embarrassed merchants, may seem inconsistent with a condition of general prosperity; but the distress chiefly affected a certain class of exporters, who, having taken advantage of the opening of the South American markets, overrated the buying capacity of the same, and were compelled to apply for parliamentary relief. Goods disposed of in the Spanish-American and foreign West Indian colonies were paid for chiefly in such produce as sugar, coffee, &c., which, as competing with British colonial produce, could not legally be offered for sale in the home market.

During 1811 wheat averaged 149s. a quarter, and the quartern loaf 1s. 3d., a price which wrung the withers of wage-earners; but agriculture throve amain. Thousands of acres, where the plough had never come before, were broken up. To this day landowners may be heard deploring the destruction of fine pasture, which it requires the lapse of centuries to restore.

In 1810 came to pass the calamity which had long been foreseen. The death of Princess Amelia, youngest and favourite daughter of George III., so grievously afflicted the old King that his intellect finally gave way, and he settled into hopeless insanity. The Government tabled resolutions enabling Parliament to frame a Regency Bill, but whereas such a bill would impose limitations upon the Regent's authority for the first twelve months, restraining him from creating peers and granting offices in reversion, the Opposition in both Houses declared for a direct invitation to the Prince of Wales to take upon himself the office of Regent in accordance with the precedent of 1788. The Whigs had no fancy to see their leader restrained from bestowing those rewards he had encouraged them to expect from him so soon as he came to power ("God send we may have a Regency," had been the pious aspiration of Thomas Creevey so long ago as 1804, "and then the cards are in our hands"). Nobody doubted that his first act would be the dismissal of his father's Tory servants; already the Whigs were busy fitting each other into the various offices, great and small, shortly to be vacated. Not a man of them suspected the sincerity of the Prince's political faith, nor imagined that he loved the Whigs only because the old King feared and hated them. All was gleeful activity—impatient preparation—among the faithful of Carlton House, while the Court party prepared to suffer inevitable eclipse.[1] They were to learn presently the truth of Lord Thurlow's bitter saying, that the Prince of Wales was "the worst anchoring ground in Europe."

The Regency, Feb. 1811.

[1] For the extent to which these preparations were carried, see some curious letters in the *Creevey Papers*, i. 136–143. Also *Diary of Sir S. Romilly*, ii. 365, and *Life of Wilberforce*, iii. 492.

All went at first in the course expected. The Prince sent for Lord Grenville as leader of the Opposition, and desired him, in conjunction with Lord Grey, to draw up the answer which his Royal Highness should return to the address of both Houses of Parliament. But at this point another influence made itself felt, altering the whole trend of affairs. Of the old Carlton House "cabinet," Richard Brinsley Sheridan alone retained much share of his master's confidence; and it was to Sheridan, his tried comrade in many a deep carouse, that the Prince was pleased to submit the document prepared by the two lords. Sheridan had borne the Whig leaders a grudge ever since they had omitted him from the "Talents" Cabinet; he roundly condemned the composition of the noble lords, drew up an alternative reply, which the Prince directed him to take in person to Lord Grey at Holland House.

The Regent sends for Lord Grenville, Jan. 1811.

Now, of all the creatures on God's earth, there is none, not even a Spanish hidalgo, so proud or sensitive as a Whig peer. Small matter for wonder, then, that the negotiations came to an abrupt close; but not before Grenville and Grey had addressed a joint remonstrance to the Regent, expressing "their deep concern in finding that their humble endeavours in his Royal Highness's service had been submitted to the judgment of another person, by whose advice his Royal Highness had been guided in his final decision." It was easy, upon this, for Sheridan to convince the Prince what a narrow escape he had run from Ministers who meant to keep him in leading-strings. Other agencies also were at work. The Marchioness of Hertford was at this time well advanced in years, but she retained much of the influence which had once been paramount over the Prince's volatile affections; and this she now exercised in favour of Perceval and his colleagues. Wild rumours began to creep abroad. It was whispered that the Prince was indisposed to change the Ministry; but the Whig small fry drew assurance from the preposterous reason alleged for this decision, namely, that his Royal Highness feared to take any step which might tend to interfere with the King's recovery. Motives of filial

consideration were the last that men had learnt to associate with the Prince's actions.

Presently, on 5th February, doubt was resolved in amazement—suspense was swallowed up by indignation. The Regent addressed a letter to Perceval informing him that it was not his intention to disturb him and his colleagues in the Government. Things were to continue as they were for the time.

The Regent retains the Perceval Administration.

Nothing could appear more natural than such a solution in the present day. The scrupulous observance by our late Sovereign and our present one of the limitations of constitutional monarchy, the regard paid by them to the responsibility of Ministers and the authority of Parliament, have tended to blind us to the change that has come over the recognised functions of the Crown in respect to political parties. The comments of the dispassionate compiler of the *Annual Register* upon the Prince Regent's anxiety lest any act of his should tend to retard his father's recovery remind one of what was expected of the head of the State by an unreformed Parliament:—

"This motive, certainly laudable in itself, must have been enforced by the persuasion that His Majesty was in a progress speedily to resume the reins of government; for had there been only a distant probability of such an event, continuing to maintain a system of government which in his judgment he disapproved would have been a violation of the Regent's duty to the public, which no sentiment of filial duty could justify."

Spring and summer went by; with the autumn all hope of the King's restoration to reason and rule had passed away; yet still the Regent made no sign. True, the Whigs had not been careful to court his favour. He had set his heart upon the Duke of York's reinstatement as Commander-in-Chief, yet this was only effected in the teeth of their vehement opposition. The Prince Regent retaliated by suddenly becoming as violently opposed to Roman Catholic emancipation as the old King himself had always been.[1]

[1] "I *know*, as I daresay you do equally, that the Prince is pledged as strongly as any man can be (even of a very late date) to support the Catholics" (W. H. Fremantle to the Marquess of Buckingham, 25th Oct. 1811).

Still, it seemed as if a complete change of administration had only been postponed until the Prince should be released in February from the restrictions imposed by the Regency Act. How was it possible that a Cabinet, rent by internal dissension, and with Canning hovering on its flank, should stand without the active and cordial support of the Court? The Ministry was seething with intrigue. Lord Wellesley, who, it will be remembered, had replaced Canning at the Foreign Office in 1809, was working as earnestly as any member of "the Mountain" for Perceval's downfall, and, in tendering to the Regent his resignation, declared that he could never again serve under that Minister in any circumstances. Wellesley laboured under the delusion that he was indispensable. His was one of those precocious natures which, coming to early and brilliant maturity, are soured rather than mellowed with age. His experience as an Indian autocrat had proved indifferent training for the give-and-take of parliamentary life. "With every member of the present Government he is in a state of warfare, and seems determined so to be."[1] His excuse for resigning—the inadequate scale of the Peninsular armaments—was a transparent one, for Wellington always received such reinforcements as he asked for.[2] What Wellesley really aimed at was the first place for himself and the second for Canning. Every man was his enemy who failed to perceive that this was necessary for the public safety. Finding nobody disposed to take this view, he insisted upon retiring from the Government, no doubt in the belief that he was only anticipating by a few weeks its demise at the hand of the Regent. That, indeed, was the general expectation; so much so that when Castlereagh was invited to take Wellesley's place at the Foreign Office, he bluntly declined, declaring that "he should be no stop-gap for any man; that, when the restrictions were at an end, and the Prince chose to make him an offer, he would receive it with

Lord Wellesley's hostility to Perceval.

[1] Buckingham's *Memoirs of the Regency*, i. 126.

[2] See Wellington's letter to Lord Liverpool, 11th April 1811, and especially another letter written in 1835 (Walpole's *Life of Spencer Perceval*, ii. 242–44).

humble duty and acknowledgment, and it would be time enough then to give an answer."[1]

The Prince Regent went so far towards fulfilling the expectation of his friends as to open negotiations early in 1812 for the admission of some of the Whig leaders to the Cabinet. His sincerity in making this overture has been almost universally suspected or denied;[2] unjustly so, as appears upon a review of the facts, although it is certainly difficult to follow the meanders of this most unstable mind. First he directed the Prime Minister to draft a letter from him—the Regent—to the Duke of York, explaining, for the information of the Lords Grenville and Grey, why he did not intend to make any change in the Ministry. When this draft was submitted for his approval on 12th February he suddenly changed his mind, no doubt under Sheridan's instigation, and forthwith wrote a letter, based upon the draft, but concluding with the wish that "some of those persons with whom the early habits of his public life were formed would strengthen his hands and form a part of his Government. . . . With such support and aided by a vigorous and united Administration, formed on the most liberal basis, I shall look with additional confidence to a prosperous issue of the most arduous contest in which Great Britain was ever engaged." This letter he directed the Duke of York to communicate to the Lords Grey and Grenville. There are so few of the public acts of this Prince which his countrymen may contemplate with satisfaction, that it seems unhandsome to question his title to credit for an earnest and enlightened design to enlist the best men in both parties for the service of the State. It was the old dream to be wrecked as often as it was revived upon the invincible realities of faction. Grey and Grenville held haughtily aloof. "Our differences of opinion," they said, "are too many and too important to admit of such a union," citing the Roman Catholic question as an impassable barrier between them and Perceval. The action of the Whig leaders at this crisis flung a lasting shadow across the annals of their party, which

The Regent's overtures to the Whigs, Feb. 1812.

[1] *Memoirs of the Regency*, i. 218. [2] Ibid.

all the efforts of their apologists have failed to lighten or remove.

The Prince Regent's indignation against his "early friends" was as violent as it proved to be enduring.[1] He turned a deaf ear to Wellesley's warning against allowing the anti-Catholic Perceval to continue in power; the only additions made to the Cabinet were Castlereagh, who took the seals of the Foreign Office, and the feeble Sidmouth, who became President of the Council. Wellesley vented his peevishness upon the Prime Minister by sending him a message through Lord Eldon to the effect that although Perceval's conduct to himself had been unmannerly, disrespectful, and insincere, he bore him no resentment, so grateful did he feel at being relieved from the degradation of serving under him!

The troubles of the Prince Regent and his Cabinet were by no means at an end. On the evening of 11th May, as Perceval entered the lobby of the House of Commons, a man started out of a recess in the doorway and discharged a pistol at his breast. Perceval fell to the shot, was carried into the room of the Speaker's secretary, and expired in a few minutes. The murderer was a bankrupt trader named Bellingham. He had neither private nor personal cause of quarrel with the Prime Minister, nor had the crime any connection with political conspiracy; it was simply the act of a creature distraught by misfortune, which he connected in some vague way with the action of the Government. The plea of insanity put forward at his trial at the Old Bailey was set aside, and the wretch was hanged on the seventh day after the murder.[2]

Assassination of Perceval, 11th May 1812.

It has been the fashion among historians to write disparagingly of Spencer Perceval's abilities and to class him among those colourless mediocrities that serve as background to more conspicuous figures; nevertheless, he

[1] "It is *true* that Prinny [the Prince Regent] told Wellesley that Grey and Grenville were a couple of scoundrels, and that Moira was a fellow no honest man could speak to" (Mr. Creevey to his wife, 26th May 1812).

[2] Parliament voted £50,000 provision for Perceval's children, besides annuities of £2000 to his widow and £1000 to his eldest son, and a monument to his memory in Westminster Abbey.

possessed qualities of a sort and in a measure that raised him far above the common run of legislators. He was but fifty when Bellingham's bullet laid him low, his administration having lasted two years and nine months. Praiseworthy tenacity of purpose, which his enemies called obstinacy was the trait which chiefly served him in guiding affairs through the peculiar difficulties which beset his party. As a speaker he was far inferior in grace and readiness to Canning, but he secured the confidence of his followers in a degree never attained by his brilliant rival, and he achieved marked success as leader of the House of Commons. Brougham has testified that when Addington's Ministry was beset by the multiple opposition of Fox, Pitt, and Windham, Perceval, as Attorney-General, maintained the defence almost single-handed. Spencer Perceval may have been wanting in range of view, but there was nothing paltry about him.

The Cabinet, left without a head; deliberated upon their position and how it was to be strengthened. Lord Liverpool obtained leave from the Prince Regent to invite the assistance of Lord Wellesley and Mr. Canning, both of whom declined to join a Government hostile to the Roman Catholic claims; Wellesley repeating, as an additional reason, his disapproval of the scale of operations in the Peninsula. The disunion of the Opposition might have encouraged Liverpool to proceed by filling up the vacancies from his own followers, but for what followed on the action of Mr. Stuart Wortley, who, on 21st May, moved for an address to the Prince Regent praying him to take measures for the formation of an efficient administration. This having been carried against Ministers by a majority of four, the Whigs hugged themselves in the delusion that now, at last, the Prince Regent would display himself in his true colours and fulfil his pledges to his "early friends" by finally shaking off the Tories. But the Prince offended them all by laying his commands upon Lord Wellesley, who began by trying to secure the support of Lord Liverpool and the old Cabinet. Failing in that attempt upon the old question of Catholic emancipation, he next tried Grey and Grenville; found them as impracticable

Ministerial crisis, May 1812.

as ever, although they were quite of his mind upon the Roman Catholic question; and finally, on 3rd June, gave up the endeavour to form a Ministry at all.

At last the road was quite clear for the Whig coach; Lord Moira, at the Prince's command, took the reins; and the concern rolled smoothly away upon a fair course. Suddenly there came violent jolts. Grey had lent credulous ear to the gossip of the town, which threw a sinister shade upon the Regent's friendship with the Marchioness of Hertford. Herein rumour may have been groundless, but such was the Prince's record that no woman could afford him her friendship without forfeiting reputation. Moreover, Lady Hertford was turned fifty by this time. Nevertheless, seeing that her ladyship was a stout Tory, using all her persuasive power on behalf of her party, the Whigs readily believed the worst. Grey in the House of Lords on 19th May referred to "an unseen and pestilent secret influence behind the throne, which it would be the duty of Parliament to brand with some mark of condemnation." These words were never forgiven by the Regent. They were aimed at Lady Hertford, whose son, Lord Yarmouth, held office in the Household as Vice-Chamberlain, and Grey's object was to have the Household appointments included in the changes caused by a new administration. The Prince was determined that his favourites in the Household should not go out with the executive ministers; Moira was quite willing to keep them; but Moira could not stand without Grey and Grenville, who remained bent upon purging the Court of the Hertford connection. So the jolts ended in a capsize; negotiations were broken off, and Lord Moira resumed his place as private gentleman.[1]

Henceforth the Prince Regent was heart and soul a Tory. He declared repeatedly that if Grey and Grenville had been forced upon him he would have abdicated the Regency.[2] Upon such unstable basis Lord Liverpool be-

[1] Lord Yarmouth afterwards stated in Parliament that he and others would have resigned had the Whig leaders taken office. He had communicated this to Sheridan at the time of the negotiations, a fact which Sheridan sedulously concealed, fully intending that the proposed coalition should not take place. (Moore's *Life of Sheridan*, 426.)

[2] *Memoirs of Thomas Moore*, i. 296.

came First Lord of the Treasury and Prime Minister in June 1812. Six months' purchase must have been pronounced at the time a wildly speculative offer for his office; yet he retained it until his health broke down in 1827. Canning refused to join Liverpool's Cabinet, as he had refused in May to join Perceval's, and for the same reason—he could not submit to sit in the House of Commons under the leadership of a colleague. "How striking is Canning's example!" exclaims Wilberforce in his diary. "Had he fairly joined Perceval on the Duke of Portland's death, as Perceval offered, he would now have been acknowledged head, and supported as such. But his ambitious policy threw him out, and he sank infinitely in public estimation, and has since with difficulty kept buoyant."[1]

Lord Liverpool's Administration, 1812–27.

Parliament was dissolved in the autumn, but before it rose from session evidence was given in both Houses that the feeling in favour of Roman Catholic emancipation had made a great advance. In the House of Lords the previous question, moved by Lord Chancellor Eldon upon a resolution affirming the principle of emancipation, was carried by a majority of one vote only; while in the House of Commons the advocates of religious equality, led by Lord Castlereagh, scored a victory of 235 votes to 106.

Dissolution of Parliament, 29th Sept. 1812.

Lord Liverpool and his colleagues had not been in office many days before Castlereagh announced in the House of Commons that the famous Orders in Council had been revoked. Although the later and more stringent of these Orders had been issued in retaliation for the Berlin and Milan decrees of Napoleon, the principle upon which they were based was that first established by Cromwell's Navigation Act of 1651, and modified by subsequent enactments, namely, that trade with the United Kingdom should be conducted only in British-built and British-owned vessels, manned by crews whereof not more than one-fourth should be aliens. There were certain exemptions in favour of foreign vessels carrying the produce of their own country; but, on the other hand,

Revocation of the Orders in Council, June 1812.

[1] Wilberforce's *Life*, iv. 34.

the produce of British colonies could be exported only to the mother country or to other British colonies, even if it had to be transhipped there for re-exportation. Moreover, all merchandise imported by a colony must either be of British origin or, if foreign, have passed through Great Britain as *entrepôt*.

These restrictions upon free intercourse may appear harassing and unnecessary at the present day; but they had brought about this important result, that, whereas in the seventeenth century by far the greater part of British merchandise was carried in Dutch bottoms, at the close of the eighteenth century the whole of it was dealt with by the British mercantile marine. Far more was involved than merely the prosperity and volume of trade; there was the encouragement of the shipbuilding industry and the employment of a maritime population. In a country depending for its very existence upon its sea-power, it was essential to create and maintain a body of British mariners liable to impressment—that is, to compulsory service in the Royal Navy in time of war. By no other means could an adequate naval reserve be created, and what seems to modern economists an antiquated, exclusive, and protective machinery was, in fact, a wise and effective expedient. But it was not always wisely administered. The right of impressment had become associated with scenes of scandalous violence; the press-gang worked on lines inconsistent with the liberty of British subjects.

The British North American colonies, previous to their revolt, had derived full benefit from the Navigation Act. In 1775 more than one-third of the merchantmen sailing under the British flag were American built; and of these, over sixty per cent. traded with the British West Indies. At the close of the War of Independence the thirteen revolted colonies became so many foreign States, and their great mercantile fleet was excluded from British colonial ports. The younger Pitt, in the interest of the British West Indies, attempted to persuade Parliament to exempt American shipping from the restrictions, but in vain. The necessities of the Royal Navy were held to be supreme, and the American carrying trade gravitated to the French and Spanish colonies.

In November 1793, war having broken out between Great Britain and France, Pitt issued the first of the Orders in Council, whereby all ships trading with French colonies were declared lawful prize, and upwards of two hundred American vessels were seized within a short time. The United States Government made vigorous remonstrance, and the Order was modified in January 1794 by confining the restriction to ships bound direct to the continent of Europe from the French colonies. Further, the right of trading with the British West Indies was conceded to the American flag.

The Orders in Council, 1793–1812.

On the renewal of the war in 1801, the British Government, "in consideration of the present state of commerce," expressly waived its right to interfere with neutral ships carrying goods from the colonies of a belligerent to their own country. Under cover of this concession, American traders began conveying goods from the French colonies to Europe; first importing them *pro formâ* into the United States, but receiving a rebate upon re-exportation, nearly or quite equivalent to the import duties paid to their own Customs. This practice was challenged by the British Government, who maintained that no genuine break in transit—no real importation into the United States—had taken place where the usual duties had not been paid without rebate; and British cruisers began seizing vessels bound to Europe under the American flag. Congress retaliated by the Non-Importation Act, the first of a series of measures severely restrictive of European trade. Fox endeavoured to meet the emergency without sacrificing the principle contended for. A fresh Order in Council was issued on 16th May 1806, proclaiming a commercial blockade of the whole European coast from Brest to the Elbe, but exempting neutral vessels clearing from a neutral port, except in respect to the harbours between the Seine and Ostend. This might have settled the question amicably, for it gave the Americans free access to certain belligerent ports; but there was another and more difficult point whereon the British Government could not afford to give way. They denied that one born a British subject could ever divest himself of his nationality by residence or service

in a foreign country; and in exercising the right of impressment, claimed the right to apprehend any British-born seaman not actually within the territory of another State—that is, upon the high seas. On the other hand, the United States lawyers contended that "the flag should protect the crew"; that, although the jurisdiction of any country did not extend territorially beyond the three-mile limit, it remained valid on board ships under the national flag, and protected British subjects from seizure by agents of the British Government. This principle, now universally recognised, was then a novel one, which the British Government could not afford to concede. The American merchant service contained large numbers of British seamen; if it were to be recognised as an asylum from military service, many thousands more would be attracted into it, not only to the detriment of the British mercantile marine, but to the destruction of that reserve of mariners upon which the Royal Navy depended for crews.

The right of impressment.

The demand of the American Government, therefore, met with a firm refusal; British cruisers continued to search vessels under the American flag; the risk of mistakes and the certainty of friction being intensified by the circumstance that both nations spoke the same language. On 22nd June 1807 the British cruiser *Shannon* hailed the United States frigate *Chesapeake* on the high seas, demanding the surrender of some deserters from the Royal Navy which it was alleged she had on board. Upon the American captain refusing to submit to search, the *Shannon* opened fire, and compelled the *Chesapeake* to strike, after twenty-one of her crew had been killed or wounded. Four men were then seized and taken on board the British ship as prisoners. The act was promptly disowned by Canning on behalf of Great Britain, and Mr. Erskine, British Minister at Washington, was instructed to offer full reparation for the affront to the American flag. In carrying this out, Erskine went beyond his powers by undertaking that American shipping should be exempt from the operation of the Orders in Council if British merchandise were admitted once more into the United States. Canning at once repudiated this

Affair of the *Shannon* and the *Chesapeake*, 22nd June 1807.

agreement, in which he perceived the surrender of a great principle. He has been blamed, and his policy denounced as narrow and forcing on war, but in truth Great Britain, engaged as she was in a life-and-death struggle, could not afford to sacrifice a single advantage which she derived from her maritime supremacy.[1]

The American Government, perceiving that the commerce of its people was being destroyed by the very means adopted to preserve it, announced that if either Great Britain or France would repeat the prohibitive decrees, the policy of non-intercourse should be enforced exclusively against the other. Napoleon was swift to seize his opportunity; he cajoled the cabinet of Washington by a promise to revoke the Berlin and Milan decrees; and in consequence the American Government in February 1811 renewed the embargo upon all intercourse with Great Britain and her colonies. Napoleon's promise was not fulfilled. Lord Wellesley, succeeding Canning at the Foreign Office, vainly remonstrated against the unfriendly course taken by the American Government; the United States had practically joined the continental alliance against England. The barrier between such conditions and actual hostilities was brittle. Grievances against Great Britain had been accumulating in the breasts of Americans for years; the exercise of right of search and impressment, the interference with foreign trade, the blockade of European ports—each had left an angry sore; and now there was a considerable war party in the States, casting covetous eyes across the Canadian frontier.

British Ministers had as much war on their hands as they had either money, men, or mind for; they foresaw, also, the disastrous effect upon British industry and commerce implied by this new hostile combination. England

[1] "Upon the imagination that the United States had a decisive hold over Great Britain through trade relations was based a series of similar commercial coercive measures, by which it was fondly believed that a people, in a struggle for life and death, could be compelled to desist from proceedings thought essential to existence, and which they had the military power to sustain. It is the belief of the writer that to the methods then adopted Great Britain really owed her final success and the deliverance of Europe from intolerable oppression." (Captain Mahan in *Scribner's Magazine*, January 1904, p. 32.)

had held her own against the whole of Europe; but how would the island realm fare in a conflict with two continents? Unluckily, her Government had esteemed at too low a value the military resources of the United States; it was not till the spring of 1812 that they resolved to revoke the obnoxious Orders in Council. Perceval's fate, and the prolonged ministerial crisis thereafter, delayed action till it was too late. The Orders were repealed on 23rd June, the very day on which a sea-fight took place between the American frigate *President* and the British frigate *Belvedere;* for on 18th June a formal declaration of war with Great Britain had been issued from Washington. Three per cent. consols fell from 62¼, where they stood in May, to 55½ in July; but the result of the campaign of Salamanca and the rupture of Russia with Napoleon brought about a rally to 60 before the close of the year.

The United States declare war against Great Britain, 18th June 1812.

Napoleon had made an attempt to get the Peninsular war off his hands before concentrating his forces upon the Niemen. He caused his Foreign Minister on 17th April to address to the British Government proposals for a cessation of hostilities, based upon conditions which it was impossible to entertain. The integrity of Spain was to be guaranteed, the *existing dynasty being declared independent.* Portugal, also, was to be established under the House of Braganza; Naples and Sicily were to be confirmed as the dominions of their respective existing monarchs, and Spain, Portugal, and Sicily were to be evacuated at once by both French and English.

Napoleon's third attempt to negotiate peace, 17th April 1812.

"If, as his Royal Highness fears," ran Castlereagh's reply, "the meaning of this proposition is that the Royal authority of Spain, and the government established by the Cortes, shall be recognised as residing in the brother of the head of the French Government, and not in the legitimate sovereign, Ferdinand VII., and his heirs . . . I am commanded frankly and explicitly to declare to your Excellency that the obligations of good faith do not permit his Royal Highness to receive a proposition for peace founded on such a basis."

The negotiations went no further. Even the most factious spirits of the Opposition could find in them no

profitable base for an attack on Liverpool's government, although Mr. Whitbread took occasion to profess his undying desire for peace and his belief in Napoleon's good faith.

Was there ever an army deserving a national welcome home, it was that to which Wellington bid farewell in a characteristically curt general order at Bordeaux on 14th June 1814. But for these Peninsular veterans there was no home-coming, no repose. Wellington, it is true, returned to England for a few weeks, to receive the thanks of Parliament, to be raised to the dignity of a Duke, and to hear that very Opposition which had so long striven to bring him and his strategy into contempt make honourable acknowledgment of his deserts. When the Government proposed to endow his dukedom with a grant of £300,000, Mr. Whitbread moved to increase it to half a million, and this was agreed to by the House of Commons without a dissentient voice. The Peninsular army was dispersed in many directions. Fourteen thousand troops were shipped off to America, to learn how to bear defeat at Plattsburg and New Orleans; others went to the Mediterranean, to the Netherlands, to India, to Ireland; only a few regiments returned to England to be reduced to a peace establishment.

The Peninsular army broken up, 14th June 1814.

For peace was now assured in Europe, the great Disturber having been securely lodged in the island of Elba, deprived of all warlike material, save a thousand soldiers wherewith to play at guard-mounting. The nations—England especially—had long arrears of beneficent work to overtake; and so it came to pass that when Wellington arrived in Paris in August as British Ambassador to the Tuileries, he was specially charged with the task of persuading the restored monarchy of France to put down the slave trade.

Peace, so long a stranger, once more reigned in the Old World; but fratricidal strife still raged in the New, whereof place must here be found for a brief retrospect upon the course.

The United States, as aforesaid, had opened war upon

Great Britain by the declaration of 18th June 1812. Never was there a people less prepared for war by land and sea than the Americans, but Britain was a long way off; her army and navy were employed, almost to the last man, in the European struggle; there might be time to extemporise a fleet and to equip land forces, and the American public were intensely eager for an attack upon Canada. They did not reckon upon an equally intense loyalty to the Crown among the Canadians, both English and French. Although the States at the beginning of the war possessed but half-a-dozen frigates and as many smaller war-vessels, they had plenty of experienced naval officers, who handled these slender resources to such good purpose that within the first twelve months the British flag was struck on every occasion when two ships engaged each other at sea. There were five such encounters in 1812; four more followed in 1813, of which one deserves to be remembered as taking place between those old adversaries the *Shannon* and the *Chesapeake*.[1] On this occasion the British Captain Broke fought a hot action with the famous American frigate in full view of thousands of spectators on Boston quays, boarded and captured her. Seven sea-fights between single frigates took place in 1814, in only one of which were the Stars and Stripes lowered before the Union flag. It seems as if the enormous numerical superiority of the British navy had impaired the skill of its officers in handling a ship in single combat, so much used had they become to manœuvring in fleets.

The American war, 1812–14.

This naval war was not confined to the ocean. Contrary to the views of Northern congressmen, the Southern representatives compelled the Government to undertake the invasion of Canada. Through extraordinary exertions a flotilla was built and launched upon the Great Lakes of the west. Timber was there for the felling; green, unluckily, but no matter so long as it would float. In one instance only nine weeks elapsed between felling the trees and launching the ship. For the rest, guns, ammunition, stores of every description, and even crews, had to be conveyed 300 or 400 miles overland. British and Canadians

[1] See p. 179 *supra*.

were no whit behind their adversaries in activity; nevertheless, on fresh water as on salt, disaster dogged King George's flag. The British flotilla on Lake Erie struck to Perry in 1813, that on Lake Champlain to Macdonough in the following year.

On land, Fortune showed another face; it had been strange, indeed, had she smiled on American arms, so poorly equipped were the States troops, so grossly ignorant of war were their officers, chosen chiefly for political considerations. The American General Hale invaded Canada in July 1812, but was beaten back to Detroit. The British General Brock captured that place in counterstroke, a sore surprise to the American Government, who had reckoned on easy conquest. In a second invasion during October the gallant Brock fell in action, but General Sheaffe, succeeding to the command, made prisoner of Wadsworth and captured most of his force.

In May 1813 the Emperor of Russia, naturally desirous that England should be free to focus all her force upon the Peninsular campaign, offered to mediate between the combatants. President Madison, to whom the offer was made first, was disposed to agree; but the British Cabinet resented the slight of not having been consulted simultaneously with the American Government. Besides, Castlereagh wrote to the English ambassador at St. Petersburg on 5th July, "The tender of mediation by Russia cannot be listened to on a question of maritime right," but declared the King's willingness to nominate plenipotentiaries to treat for peace with others appointed by President Madison.

Mediation offered by the Emperor of Russia, May 1813.

At that time men and news spent weeks in crossing the Atlantic. It was August 1814 before the peace commissioners met in Ghent, three from each nation; it was the 10th October before the basis of a treaty agreed on between them was laid before the American Congress; it was not until Christmas Eve that the treaty of peace was signed by the plenipotentiaries at Ghent.

Peace negotiations at Ghent, Aug. 1814.

All through these long months the unhappy war had been dragging along its desultory, but destructive, course.

It was part of the misery of tardy communication that the English Government, striving to come to terms with their adversary with one hand, had to set the other to more vigorous prosecution of hostilities. The abdication of Napoleon in the early days of April 1814 released Wellington's army from the European campaign, and 14,000 veterans were shipped off from Bordeaux under command of Sir Edward Pakenham for the seat of western war. Before they arrived, General Ross had captured Washington and burnt the Capitol and all the public buildings. Pakenham, the hero of Salamanca, took over the chief command on Christmas Day, when the treaty of peace, all unknown to him, had actually been signed. He conducted the siege operations against New Orleans until 8th January, when he ordered a general assault at daybreak. The assault failed under a terrific fire from the enemy's lines. General Pakenham was spared the supreme penalty for his faulty tactics; he did not witness the bloody reverse of his comrades in arms, for he fell mortally wounded at the beginning of one of the most lamentable actions in the annals of our army. Against this reverse there remains to be set the capitulation of Fort Mobile to a combined force of British soldiers and sailors on 11th February; then came the ratification of the peace treaty by the President and Senate on 17th February, and there was an end to a war which had, as was truly said in the *Annual Register* at the time, "no great object on either side." The British Orders in Council, original cause of the dispute, had been repealed in the first year of the war, and were not so much as mentioned in the treaty; but the 10th Article was far-reaching in its ultimate effect, for it bound the two nations to combine in the total suppression of the slave trade, an object which British Ministers had never allowed to fall altogether out of sight during the long years of strife.

Assault on New Orleans repulsed, 8th Jan. 1815.

It is not a little to the credit of "All the Talents" that during their brief and stormy administration they initiated a reform of prime importance to the human race. The traffic in African slaves, established even before Great Britain possessed any American colonies, had grown to enormous

dimensions by the end of the eighteenth century. In 1790 the total number of negroes annually exported from Africa exceeded 74,000, whereof more than half were carried by British traders. It was calculated that about two million black slaves were in bondage to British, French, Spanish, and American planters in the New World; and so great was the mortality, so slow the rate of reproduction under the unfavourable conditions of forced labour, that it required an annual importation of 58,000 freshly caught negroes to keep up the stock. So far back as 1671, the Quakers, led by their founder George Fox, had denounced the iniquity of hunting and stealing men and women and selling them like cattle; but it was not until the brutal character of the African trade was brought home to the popular understanding that any considerable body of opinion was directed against an institution derived from an antiquity as remote as that of war and commerce. Not until William Wilberforce from his place in the House of Commons, and Thomas Clarkson outside it, had persisted for more than a quarter of a century in proclaiming the horrible secrets of African man-hunts, the sickening incidents of the oversea passage, the heartless discipline of the plantations, and the stupendous waste of lives resulting from the traffic,[1] did the national conscience respond to William Cowper's description of the slave trade as "human nature's broadest, foulest blot."[2]

Suppression of the slave trade, 1806.

Already, in 1788, Pitt had moved the House of Commons to consider the subject; but a reform so injurious to vested interests, striking at a branch of commerce so firmly established, required a weight of opinion behind it which had not come into being at that time. Thenceforward, Wilberforce never rested from pressing the question upon the attention of Parliament, and it was through no fault of his that Great Britain did not lead the way among European nations in this most necessary of reforms. Denmark was then a considerable colonial power, and in

[1] The price paid for negroes at the port of shipment was based on the calculation that only 50 per cent. would survive the voyage and the subsequent "hardening" as serviceable slaves. This left out of account the mortality among the captives on their way from the interior of Africa to the coast.

[2] *The Task*, ii. 22.

May 1792 the King of Denmark had issued an edict prohibiting the slave trade within his dominions as from the end of 1802. Already also the Northern States of the American Union, beginning with Vermont in 1777, had either abolished slavery or made provision for its gradual abolition within their bounds. Howbeit, Wilberforce received his reward in the end. He persuaded the Cabinet to take up the question, and on 10th June 1806 Fox moved a resolution that effectual measures should be taken for the abolition of the African slave trade. The motion was carried by 114 votes to 15, and a similar one passed through the House of Lords by a majority of more than two to one. Effect was given to these resolutions in the following year by an Act providing that no vessel should clear out of any British port for slaves after 1st May 1807, and that no slave should be landed in any British colony after 1st March 1808. Observe, it was only the traffic in negroes for the purposes of slavery that was prohibited; slavery itself was not otherwise interfered with; the labour supply in British plantations was to be kept up by such means and forethought as were applied to the breeding of any other kind of domestic animals. Nevertheless, it was a long step in a course afterwards to be followed by every civilised State, with the ultimate result of putting an end to a greater aggregate of human misery than perhaps has ever been removed by means of legislation.

Prohibition of the slave trade, 1807.

Fox was not permitted to witness the full triumph of the cause which he had advocated passionately for so many years. He never returned to the House of Commons after the debate on the slave trade; hence the especial pathos of certain passages in his speech on that occasion—his last public utterance. "So fully am I impressed," said he, "with the vast importance and necessity of attaining what will be the object of my motion this night, that if, during the almost forty years that I have had the honour of a seat in Parliament, I had been so fortunate as to accomplish that, and that only, I should think I had done enough, and could retire from public life with comfort, and the conscious satisfaction that I had done my duty."

The British Cabinet were in earnest when they gave Wellington his instructions, empowering him to offer, as an inducement, either the advance of three millions sterling to compensate the French planters in the West Indies, or the free cession of the island of Trinidad. But these overtures were received with suspicion. Philanthropy, thought Talleyrand, was a very becoming luxury for persons of wealth and leisure. Great Britain had been so simple as to put an end to her own traffic in slaves; what more natural than that she should wish to see her neighbours deprived of the same source of profit? As to her motives being disinterested—*credat Judæus!*

The Congress of Vienna, 1814–15.

Meanwhile, a congress of crowned heads and plenipotentiaries had assembled at Vienna for the excellent purpose of rearranging the dislocated map of Europe. Castlereagh went there first, representing the Prince Regent's Government; but when he returned in February for the opening of Parliament, the Duke of Wellington was sent in his place He found matters at a pretty hopeless pass. "Never," Castlereagh had warned him, "never at any former period was so much spoil thrown loose for the world to scramble for."[1] Every Power was intent upon pushing claims to territory, denouncing the while, as extravagant, the claims of every other Power. Actually the only government that wanted nothing for itself was Great Britain, as may be seen by inspecting the instructions of her plenipotentiary.

Gradually the Powers grouped themselves into opposing sides—Russia and Prussia being ranged against Austria and Great Britain. France stood apart, inclining to throw in her lot with Russia, but restrained by "some personal and some national feelings which at present operate in our favour."[2] The atmosphere was heavily electric; every day an explosion seemed imminent; reasonable argument was exhausted; what appeal could be had but to arms? Arms it was to be, as was suddenly put beyond a doubt, but not upon those sordid issues whereon the Congress had been spilling its ink for months.

[1] Wellington's *Supplementary Despatches*, ix. 465.
[2] Memorandum by Lord Liverpool, 12th December 1814.

On 7th March word came to Wellington that Napoleon was at large—had escaped from Elba, landed at Cannes, and was marching upon Paris. Look to yourselves, oh ye principalities and powers! Take good heed, for here is the forest afire again; here is business on hand more urgent than land-grabbing.

The Hundred Days, March–June 1815.

Upon two points the continental Powers were quite unanimous: first, that Wellington must take command of the troops on the French frontier of Belgium; second, that he must make known to his Government that not a Russian, Prussian, or Austrian brigade could be moved without English money. On this understanding a quadruple alliance was concluded on 25th March, binding the Great Powers to keep the field until "Buonaparte should be placed absolutely beyond possibility of exciting disturbance and renewing his attempts to possess himself of the supreme power in France." Wellington received from his Government authority to guarantee a subsidy of five millions sterling, to be divided among the three Great Powers, in addition to the annual payment of £2,100,000 due by Great Britain for the proportion in which her armed contingent fell short of her obligation under the treaty of Paris. Before all this had got done, France was at the feet of her Emperor. Royal troops, sent off in haste to withstand his advance, tore off the white cockade of the Bourbons and shouted *Vive l'Empereur!* Ney, a peer of the Restoration, marched from Paris declaring he would bring Napoleon back captive in an iron cage. One glance from beneath that lowering brow, and Ney was ready to go to the death (as he did) for his old master. On 20th March Louis XVIII. fled from his capital; before nightfall Napoleon was installed once more in the Tuileries. Once more he found allies in the British House of Commons; Mr. Whitbread declaiming against interference with the French nation in their choice of a ruler, and foretelling the speedy bankruptcy of Great Britain as the result of renewing the war. Napoleon wrote to the Prince Regent on 4th April, expressing hopes that the Peace of Paris (14th April 1814) would not be broken. His letter, by the Prince's command, was returned unopened.

On 5th April Wellington arrived in Brussels to take command of a composite force of Dutch, Belgians, Brunswickers, Hanoverians, and British, 24,200 in all, of which only 4000 were British, mostly recruits—"not what they ought to be to enable us to maintain our military character in Europe."[1] Even after reinforcements had brought the British contingent up to 31,000 and the whole allied army up to 93,000, Wellington, not prone to despondency, but much given to forcible language, described it as "an infamous army, very weak and ill-equipped, and a very inexperienced staff."[2] The Russian army was in Poland, still distant from the Middle Rhine, which their Emperor had undertaken to guard; 90,000 Austrians were moving into position on the Rhine between Basle and Mannheim, the rest of their forces being in Lombardy; while the Bavarian army, numbering, with contingents from other States, 80,000 troops, assembled on the Upper Rhine. The Prussian army was also mustering in the Rhine provinces, slowly at first; but by the beginning of June, Prince Blücher, with headquarters at Namur, had 120,000 troops disposed along the southern frontier of Belgium. Prussia was to atone nobly in the coming struggle for the pusillanimity of her rulers in the past.

Assuredly there was force enough on her frontiers to restrain France from aggression; but how long could such force be maintained? Even the British Treasury was not inexhaustible, and a moderate strain would break the exchequers of the other Powers. The allies, therefore, had determined upon the invasion of France and the final destruction of Napoleon's power as a disturber of peace.

In comparing Marlborough with Wellington, Lord Wolseley has remarked that "Marlborough always took the offensive, Wellington usually waited to be attacked. . . . Whilst Marlborough will be remembered for his persistent and brilliant offensive, history will always couple Wellington's name with that of Fabius as a tactician."[3] But on whatever occasions Wellington was *cunctator* by

[1] Wellington to Lord Bathurst (*Despatches*, xii. 291).
[2] Ibid., 358.
[3] Introduction to *Wellington and Waterloo* by Major Griffiths.

design (and my belief is that they were few), this was not one of them. On 13th April he forwarded to the Powers at Vienna a completely offensive plan of campaign, urging the immediate invasion of France as "a point so clear, that it would be a useless waste of your time and mine to discuss it."[1] The Powers were not ready, and, with all the desire in the world to strike home, Wellington had to stand on the defensive.

But Napoleon was ready. With amazing speed he had equipped a mobile force of 125,000 men, with which, true to the military idiosyncrasy of the French, he determined to carry the war upon a foreign soil. Leaving Paris on 12th June, on the 14th he was at the head of his army at Beaumont. Opposing his farther advance, Blücher's four Prussian corps held the frontier from Liége on the east to Charleroi on the west, where the line of Wellington's posts began, extending from Genappe to Enghien, and by Ath to Oudenarde on the Scheldt, two divisions lying with the headquarters in Brussels.

Crossing the Sambre on the 15th, Napoleon occupied a position resting on the three points of Campinaire, Gosselies, and Charleroi. He handed over command of his left wing to Marshal Ney, with orders to occupy Quatre-Bras that night and march upon Brussels next morning. Now Wellington had made up his mind that the French attack would be delivered by way of Mons, instead of across the Sambre. Believing the demonstration on the southern frontier to be but a feint, he had left the important position of Quatre-Bras unoccupied; but the Belgian General de Perponcher, uneasy about what was taking place in his front, moved in a Nassau battalion and some horse artillery; and the presence of these deterred Ney from attacking until his troops should have had their night's rest.[2]

Napoleon invades Belgium, 15th June 1815.

[1] *Despatches*, xii. 295, 302, 304.

[2] Harsh has been the judgment passed upon our Dutch and Belgian allies in this campaign, and certainly some of their troops did flinch under the French fire at Waterloo. But let this be remembered to their lasting honour, that if Perponcher had not acted on his own responsibility by moving a brigade into Quatre-Bras on the night of the 15th, there would have been no battle of Waterloo on the 18th, for the road to Brussels lay open to Napoleon.

There was a great ball in Brussels that night, given by the Duchess of Richmond. Wellington not only attended it himself, but allowed his generals and other officers to leave their posts at the front and attend it also. Nobody is certain when the news reached him of the capture of Charleroi; probably in the ball-room; but there cannot be reasonable doubt, though it has been indignantly denied, that the Duke was completely taken by surprise. It was not before two o'clock on the morning of the 16th, twenty hours after the Prussians had been driven out of Charleroi, a place only thirty miles from Brussels, that officers in the ball-room were ordered off to their commands, and the two reserve divisions were marched off to the front under General Picton.

The Duke of Wellington is surprised, 15th June 1815.

Not until Wellington arrived in person at Quatre-Bras about midday on the 16th, and convinced himself that here was no feigned attack, did he order his forces to concentrate in support of the Prussian left. The Duke had fallen into what should have been a fatal error, had not Ney balanced it by committing another. Had Ney been astir betimes on the 16th, he would have found nothing to oppose his two divisions at Quatre-Bras but a single Dutch brigade. He delayed his attack till 3 P.M., when Picton's division was forming on the ground, and when one of his own divisions (d'Erlon's) had been taken from him by the Emperor. Napoleon also wasted the morning. At Ligny, five miles to the south-east of Quatre-Bras, lay a single Prussian *corps d'armée* (Zieten's). When the French attack was delivered in the afternoon, Zieten had received the support of two other Prussian corps.

Wellington had but 7000 infantry in line of battle at 3 P.M., when Ney attacked him with 15,000 of all arms; but brigades of the allies were coming up quickly, and by five o'clock Ney's force was outnumbered by 6000 or 7000. Still, the conflict roared along till the summer night began to fall, and Ney drew off sullenly in the twilight, leaving the allies in possession of the field. But their position was very precarious. The Emperor had routed the Prussian

Battles of Quatre-Bras and Ligny, 16th June 1815.

army at Ligny, and driven Prince Blücher, as he hoped, upon his base on the Rhine, out of the field of operations altogether. "Old Blücher," said Wellington on the morning of 17th June, "has had a damned good hiding, and has gone eighteen miles to his rear. We must do the same. I suppose they'll say in England that we have been licked. Well, I can't help that." The work before him was to beat a retreat in the presence of 100,000 victorious French. Critical enough; but once again he drew profit from the mistakes of his enemy. It was two o'clock in the afternoon before Napoleon assumed the offensive, by which hour the allied infantry were far on the Brussels road, leaving only the cavalry as an escort for the Duke. A deluge of rain broke just as the pursuit began, turning the whole of that fertile plain into one sea of mud, and rendering all but the paved roads impassable for artillery. By seven o'clock in the evening the Anglo-Dutch army, numbering 67,661, with 156 guns, had taken up the position of Mont-Saint-Jean, in front of the forest of Soignes, and a couple of miles south of the village of Waterloo. The troops bivouacked in line of battle, the French army deploying upon a ridge parallel to them, the average distance between the two hosts being less than a mile. From flank to flank of either army was less than three miles. That morning Napoleon had detached Grouchy with two corps in pursuit of Blücher, reducing his force to 71,947 men, with 246 guns.

The rain lasted most of the night; next morning, Sunday, 18th June, dawned lowering and sultry. Of the operations on that memorable Sabbath, not even a sketch need be presented here, seeing that no battle of modern (or indeed of any) times has been so minutely described and its conduct criticised, in books accessible to every reader.[1] One after another, Napoleon's most famous marshals and generals had tasted defeat at the hands of Wellington. This day,

Battle of Waterloo, 18th June 1815.

[1] Had I to commend to the student a single volume in the immense bibliography of Waterloo, vivid and at the same time scientifically impartial, it should be M. Henry Houssaye's *1815—Waterloo* (Paris, 1899). There is an English translation of this wholly admirable work.

for the first time, the two foremost commanders of the age were to measure their strength against each other. Napoleon, disdaining to manœuvre, spent his force in a series of frontal attacks in massive columns. The story of the heroic defence of Wellington's advanced posts—the grange and garden of Hougoumont, held throughout the day by the British Guards on the right of the allied line, and in its centre the farm of La Haye Sainte, only evacuated at 4 P.M. after its garrison of 400 King's German Legion had bitten their last cartridge—will stir the pulses of generations yet unborn; but not more surely than the record of the infantry in the main line, British, Belgian, Dutch, and German, upon whom the Emperor poured the deluge of his magnificent cavalry four times in vain, so steadfast stood the squares.

Then, in all the history of armies, there is no episode of more intense moment than the great Corsican's last act of war, when, at sunset, he hurled five superb battalions[1] of his Middle Guard upon the British right, and beheld them recoil. Well may our countrymen thrill with honest pride as they pore over the incidents of that day; yet let no Briton blush to own that it was brave old Blücher, with the snows of threescore years and twelve on his head, who clinched the victory. Rather should we blush to hear the Prussian's share in the laurels called in question, as some have done. Wellington was the first to own it, and who should know better than he? "I should not do justice," he wrote that night in the little tavern at Waterloo, "to my own feelings or to Marshal Blücher and the Prussian army, if I did not attribute the successful result of this arduous day to the cordial and timely assistance I received from them."[2]

Blücher had been twice ridden over and trampled almost to death by the French cavalry at Ligny. It was doubtful whether he could ever take the saddle again; but on the evening of the 17th he struggled out of bed, overruled Gneisenau, his Chief of the Staff, who advised him to save his army by falling back on Liége (why should he

[1] Five, says M. Houssaye; but Professor Oman makes out that there were six (*English Historical Review*, Oct. 1904).

[2] *Despatches*, xii. 484.

endanger it for Wellington, who had failed to support him at Ligny?), sent word to Wellington that he would move to his support on the morrow, and was true to tryst. Leaving Thielmann to keep Grouchy engaged at Wavre, he drove his way through roads axle-deep, and was visible from the right of the French line just before Napoleon delivered his grand attack at one o'clock. From that moment the Emperor had to stand on the defensive with his right, while he struck with his centre and left. Any schoolgirl, one might think, could apprehend the effect of this flank menace upon one of two armies so nearly balanced in numbers. Napoleon, expecting hourly from the east the approach of Grouchy with 35,000 men, had to prepare instead at an early hour against 80,000 Prussians, whose attack became operative at 4.30 P.M. It behoves us as a nation to be generous in recognising what this meant to Wellington. Could he have withstood, with his composite force, the weight of Napoleon's undivided impact? Would he, some may ask, have awaited it, if he had not good reason to rely on Blücher's co-operation? The brunt of the fighting—the heaviest loss—was borne by the Anglo-Dutch line. To speculate how much more it could have borne without abandoning its ground is to enter upon matter seamed with national prepossession.

How fiercely the field was contested, let the casualty roll testify. In killed and wounded, the Anglo-Dutch troops lost 17,186 officers and men; the Prussians, 6999. The losses of the French never could be reckoned, for their army was dispersed. They have been variously calculated as between 18,000 and 40,000.[1] Two hundred and twenty-seven cannon they certainly abandoned in their flight.

For the last time, the fallen Emperor returned to his capital; performed the act of abdication on 22nd June, and offered his services for the defence of France to the five Commissioners who had taken over the government. But

[1] Professor Oman has gone minutely into the matter upon the basis of M. Martinieu's *Tableaux par Corps des Officiers tués et blessés pendant les Guerre de l'Empire 1805–1815*, and concludes that the total loss of the French army in killed and wounded at Waterloo alone was about 37,000—representing 50 per cent., or every second man. In the whole fighting from 15th to 21st June, he puts the loss at 55,200 (*English Historical Review*, Oct. 1904).

even Frenchmen had lost faith in the Man of Destiny, and the offer was declined. On 3rd July Napoleon was at Rochefort, vainly seeking to elude the British cruisers and escape to America. On the 15th he surrendered to Captain Maitland of the *Bellerophon*, and wrote a letter to the Prince Regent expressing a desire "to seat himself at the hearth of the British people."

The closing scenes of the great Napoleonic drama may be told in few words. The allies — Anglo-Dutch and Prussian — marched upon Paris with 120,000 men. On 3rd July the Convention of Paris was signed, securing a suspension of arms, the evacuation of the capital by its garrison of 50,000, its peaceable occupation by the allies, and the withdrawal of all French troops to beyond the Loire. Louis XVIII. entered Paris as King of France on 8th July. On 15th November a further convention was signed providing for the withdrawal of all foreign troops from France, except an army of occupation of 150,000, to be maintained for five years at the expense of France, and for the payment by France of a war indemnity of £28,000,000 sterling. The army of occupation, consisting of 30,000 men supplied by each of the four Great Powers and 30,000 drawn from the smaller German States, was placed by common consent under command of the Duke of Wellington. He exercised the powers conferred upon him with such mingled moderation and firmness as to induce the Powers to remit two-thirds of the indemnity and to shorten the term of occupation by two years. He returned to England in October 1818, to receive from his Government acknowledgment in terms that have seldom been addressed officially to a subject of the Crown:—

The Convention of Paris, 3rd July 1815.

"Amidst the signal achievements which will carry your name and the glory of the British Empire down to the latest posterity, it will not form the least part of your Grace's renown that you have exercised and concluded a command unexampled in its character with the concurrent voice of approbation from all whom it could concern."[1]

[1] Wellington's *Supplementary Despatches*, xii. 852.

The world was delivered at last from the bloody coil that had enwrapped Europe as the arms of the octopus wind round a swimmer. From the unfathomable waste of written matter whence the historian must net what knowledge may be had of motive and design, of fact and act, stands out clear one solid actuality—that, of all the Powers, England alone knew her purpose from the beginning, and kept it single to the end. Napoleon, so long as he followed a single aim, prevailed, establishing France as the foremost of nations, purged of corrupt laws, impregnable; but his purpose, branching as it grew, was shattered in the tempest it provoked and defied. Of all the nations, Britannia alone never departed from the course she had set before her —Castlereagh and Canning her head—Nelson and Wellington her arms: ambidextrous, one may say. Among wrecked and reeling thrones, waxing and waning realms, quailing governments and distrustful allies, she held one steady purpose—the world shall not bow to Bonaparte.

And the means whereby she effected it. Threefold those material means. First, Nelson and his Seventy-fours; Nelson, and that band of captains to whom he made himself the model and eternal type; Nelson, with such seamen as he knew how to create.

Second, Wellington and his thin red line, far overlapping the deep flanks of columns and drenching them with intolerable fire—"bullets not made of butter"—the Iron Duke with his alchemy transforming soldiery of other nations into lines, different in colour, but with the same qualities of steel and lead—grey and green Portuguee, yellow Spaniard, blue Netherlander.

Third, the liberal hand in Downing Street, pouring British millions into the hollow coffers of such Powers as from time to time would take their place in line against the Aggressor.

These were the three agencies whereby Britain enforced her will. Had one or other of them flagged or failed, the map of Europe had been laid on different lines at this day.

CHAPTER IX

Prosperity of British industries—The Luddites—"Orator" Hunt—Habeas Corpus Act suspended—The march of the Blanketeers—Proceedings against the Radical Press—The Savings Banks Acts—Retrenchment in public expenditure—Brief revival of trade—Confused state of the Opposition—The Duke of Wellington joins the Cabinet—Renewed depression of trade—Suspension of cash payments—Agitation for Parliamentary Reform—The Peterloo riot—The right of public meeting—Dismissal of Lord Fitzwilliam—The "Six Acts"—The Cato Street Plot—Attempted revolution in Scotland.

By the Convention of Paris (3rd July 1815) Great Britain was relieved from the strain and burden of war, waged all but continuously for two-and-twenty years with nations far exceeding her in population. During these years she had acquired absolute control of the seas, and her land forces, which had sunk since the days of Marlborough into an incoherent assemblage of more or less serviceable units, had been welded into an army which had overthrown the conqueror of Europe. But in entering upon an era of peace, stock must be taken of the material condition of the nation; and this brings out a result which none would have been so rash as to foretell. Great Britain exacted no indemnity in specie from the vanquished, although she had paid very large subsidies to her allies. Leaving India out of account, where events moved on an independent orbit, she surrendered all the territory she had acquired during the war except Malta, Mauritius, Ceylon, Trinidad, and the Cape Colony. How many thousands of her soldiers and sailors had fallen in battle, or perished by wounds and disease, may never be reckoned up; yet the nation emerged from the conflict more wealthy and more populous than when it took up arms. The gross public revenue (including Ireland) in 1800 was £64,651,000; in 1815 it had risen to £111,402,131, falling again after the war taxes had been taken off to £74,597,195 in 1821. The population of the United Kingdom in 1801 was 15,717,000; in 1811 it amounted to 17,927,000, and in 1821 to 20,984,000.

War, then, the direst calamity that can afflict any community, had brought an immense increase in prosperity to

one of the principal combatants. True it is, there had been a huge addition to the national debt — from 240 millions in 1793, bearing £9,430,000 interest, to 861 millions in 1815, with interest, exclusive of sinking fund, amounting to an annual charge of £32,645,000; including the sinking fund, to £46,000,000. Yet the industry of the community rose buoyant under the consequent increase in the burden of taxation.[1] The people had the energy to turn to the best account the natural advantages of their land—its mineral wealth and fertile soil. Above all, the "silver streak," and the complete command thereof by the British navy, secured the country against invasion, and rendered it the one place in Europe where capital might be invested in productive enterprise with reasonable security.

Prosperity of British industries, 1816.

Yet it had been useless to go on producing unless markets could be found for the produce. Foreign communities, grievously impoverished either by the actual devastation wrought by war or by taxation for its support, often by both, had less money to spend than formerly; but such as they had was spent in Great Britain, where alone manufactures could be carried on. Even Napoleon's formidable attempt to destroy the commerce of Britain by excluding her flag from continental ports only succeeded in hampering it for a while. It was evaded by extensive smuggling, which he could not control after the loss of his sea-power. Nay, finding that his armies could not keep the field without British-made goods, he was forced to honeycomb his continental system with special licences for their admission. As Mr. J. R. Green has trenchantly put it, "the French army which marched to Eylau was clad in greatcoats made at Leeds, and shod with shoes made at Northampton."[2]

Stimulated by the necessities of her very enemies, Great Britain became the workshop of the world, while the

[1] All economists of the eighteenth century viewed with extreme apprehension the consequences of what Adam Smith in 1775 termed "the enormous public debt of England" (it amounted then to 130 millions). Smith warned his countrymen not to "be too confident that England could support, without great distress, a burden a little greater than what has been already laid upon her" (*Wealth of Nations*, ii. 563).

[2] *History of the English People*, iv. 363.

mastery of the ocean secured for her mercantile marine practical monopoly of the carrying trade. The manufacturing and mercantile classes throve apace; agriculture prospered on war prices for bread and beef; landowners raised their rents, which good markets enabled farmers to pay and to make handsome profits withal. War, in short, had wrought wonders for capitalists, great and small; but labourers and artisans, whose capital consists only of sinew and brain, bettered their condition only in proportion as the labour market was depleted by the drain of recruits for army and navy. In so far as this drain was not balanced by a rapid increase in the population, it must have caused a corresponding rise in wages; but that again was neutralised, even in this period of mercantile and agricultural activity, by the progressive invention of labour-saving machinery.

The working classes, therefore, were the first to suffer when, with the close of the war, industrial activity received a violent check. Peace, so far from bringing plenty, fell like an untimely frost upon luxuriant herbage. The demand for war material suddenly stopped. In 1816 the export trade of the United Kingdom was less by 16 per cent. than in 1815, the imports diminished by 20 per cent. The price of every kind of manufactured commodity dropped; wages necessarily followed; many works were closed and thousands of hands were thrown idle. This, too, at a time when the labour market was glutted by reductions in the army and navy, and the disembodiment of the militia, whereby some 200,000 able-bodied men were thrown adrift to find means of support. Agriculture shared to the full in the adversity. The Board of Agriculture estimated the average reduction in farm rents at 25 per cent.; which, taking the gross rental of the United Kingdom at 36 millions sterling, represented a loss to landlords of 9 millions of income. Many tenants had thrown up their farms or given notice to quit, upon which phenomenon the Board commented as follows:—

Effect of the peace upon home industries, 1816.

"It is scarcely necessary to remark that, until the present period of declension commenced, such an idea as giving notice to

quit a farm, except for the purpose of hiring a better one, may be said to have been almost unknown in the kingdom." [1]

All this had been a perplexity and trial for the labouring classes, yet such as might be patiently lived through, had food-stuffs remained reasonably cheap. Unluckily, that was not to be. A wet, inclement spring, a sunless summer, and an autumn of incessant rain brought ruin upon the harvest of 1816. Wheat rose from 52s. 6d. in January to 103s. a quarter in December. Jeshurun, we read, waxed fat and kicked, but Demos never becomes really dangerous until his belly is empty. Men, clamouring for work and getting none, turned fiercely upon what they blamed as the chief cause of their misfortunes—the new labour-saving machinery.

The Luddites, 1812, 1816.

The textile industry had been earliest affected by the introduction of automatic weaving. The power-loom was invented, or at least adapted from former inventions, by an English clergyman, Dr. Edmund Cartwright, who, like many others of ingenious intellect, derived no material benefit from his discovery. On the contrary, poor gentleman, having patented his loom in 1785, he built a mill for it at Doncaster, ran himself into bankruptcy, and after the value of his invention had been placed beyond dispute, received from Parliament in 1809 a grant of £10,000, to recoup him for £30,000 or £40,000 that he had sunk in bringing it out.

Now the average wage-earner, having no margin of subsistence, cannot be blamed if he fails to apprehend the conditions affecting his employment in their wider aspect. The power-loom multiplied indefinitely the productive capacity, and therefore the wealth, of the country; poor solace this for the hand-loom weaver, who found himself out of work or, at best, hopelessly outstripped in output. Hence blind rage against the machines, bursting into outrageous mischief when the pinch became acute. Was there justice under Heaven, then, that men with honest

[1] See the Report: *Annual Register*, 1816, p. 459. This sentence might have been written to describe the situation in 1880–1900, when agriculture first encountered the full results of free imports and foreign competition. The average fall in farm rents was about the same at both periods—viz. 25 per cent.

will to work should be driven starving to the workhouse, with their wives and little ones? There had been riots and destruction of machinery in 1812; they broke out again in 1816—more formidable this time—the rioters resuming the queer title adopted in the former year, suggestive, had they thought of it, of unkind reflections upon their sanity.

Of all the subjects of George III., perhaps he whom his neighbours would have judged least likely to bequeath a name to history was one Ned Ludd, a village idiot in Leicestershire. Tormented one day, after the fate of his kind, by certain lads, he chased them into a weaver's house, and failing to find them within, let loose his wrath upon a couple of stocking looms, which he smashed to bits. It was in the name of this Ludd—canonised by the rioters as "General Ludd"—that destructive outrages took place in every part of the kingdom where labour-saving machinery had been set up.

The trouble was not confined to the weaving trade. The price of iron had dropped 40 per cent.; two-thirds of the furnaces in the country were out of blast; many thousands of workers had been discharged, and the wages of the rest were cut down to a point in grim contrast with the price of bread. Collieries were thrown idle with a similar result; and, to crown all, farm labourers joined in the general disorder, clamouring for a living wage, and failing to get it, took to burning stacks and destroying live-stock, in the insane belief that farmers had combined to raise the price of corn. At Littleport, near Ely, the riot became wholesale robbery, and the troops fired on the mob, killing two men. Of seventy-three persons arrested and tried before a special commission, no fewer than thirty-four were condemned to death, and five of these actually suffered on the gallows.

Here, then, was the stuff whereof revolutions are wrought, and men were on the ground to turn it to account. They had been working to that end ever since Fox in 1797 had proclaimed the need for radical reform; they gloried in the title of Radicals, which made them as much an object of dread to the Whigs as to the Tories. They chose as their titular leader one of that capitalist

class which it was their foremost object to destroy, a Wiltshire squire named Henry Hunt—thenceforward known to such fame as the demagogue may earn as "Orator Hunt." This worthy could boast of but a shady record. Born in 1773, at the age of two-and-twenty he married a girl whom he had never seen, the daughter of an innkeeper in Devizes; deserted her in 1802, after she had borne him three children, and ran off with the wife of a friend named Vince. Previous to that exploit he had tasted prison fare, having challenged his commanding officer in the yeomanry to a duel; a breach of discipline for which he declined to apologise. Result—£100 fine and six weeks' imprisonment. After that his career was a tilt at all authority. A disciple of Horne Tooke, he allied himself with a crew of desperadoes—Thistleton, Dr. Watson, and the like—in a wild conspiracy to fire the barracks, seize the Tower of London, and establish a Committee of Public Safety after the approved French model. The will for all mischief was there, but there were obstacles in the way. The pikes were ready, but they would try the platform first. A meeting of the unemployed and distressed was summoned in Spa Fields on 15th November, where Hunt and others spouted sedition in terms which, anywhere outside British dominions, would have been their death-warrant. An address was drawn up to the Prince Regent calling upon him to adopt immediate means to "relieve the sufferers from the misery which now overwhelms them." The meeting was adjourned till 2nd December to receive the Regent's reply. Hunt had the sagacity to be late for it, foreseeing disturbance; Watson took his place, and waving a tricolour flag—the emblem of revolution—led the mob into the City, where they committed sundry depredations before the arrival of troops scattered them without serious violence. One of the gang, named Castle, turned informer; the Government, thus apprised of the true nature of the conspiracy, put four others on trial for high-treason, an exaggerated charge upon which no jury could be got to convict them, and they were discharged.

"Orator" Hunt, 1773–1835.

Hunt, a man of education and intelligence, perceiving

the futility of sporadic disturbances, set himself to organise the working classes in all the centres of industry. Secret clubs and societies were formed, and a charter was drawn up embodying the six objects which they were sworn to obtain—namely, vote by ballot, abolition of property qualification for members of Parliament, payment of members, yearly Parliaments, universal suffrage, and nationalisation of the land. Harmless, it may be thought by a generation which has grown up and prospered under the first two of these conditions, and is accustomed to hear the others discussed, more or less academically, in the House of Commons; but full of boding to one that had watched the genesis of the Reign of Terror. Hence messages on the matter from the Prince Regent to Parliament; hence the appointment of a Committee of Secrecy in each House to gauge the depth of the danger. Liberty of speech and opinion—certainly—is it not our British Palladium?—but we find, reported the Lords, that these fellows are arming, organising rebellion, coercing peaceable citizens to join them in preparing "for the most atrocious scenes of outrage and violence," and for "the subversion of the constitution and the plunder of society."[1] Is liberty to condone the circulation of thousands of handbills, summoning the people to raid the shops of gunmakers, and crying, "No Regent! no Castlereagh! off with their heads!"[2] Then, as if to dot the "i's" and cross the "t's" of this document, stones were thrown at the Regent's carriage, breaking one of its windows, as he returned from opening Parliament.

Habeas Corpus Act suspended, Feb. 1817–March 1818.

Ministers took instant action upon these reports. They brought in a bill to suspend the Habeas Corpus Act in England and its equivalent in Scotland, and another to prohibit the holding of any meeting except on the licence of a magistrate acting on the requisition of seven householders. In following this course they have earned bitter obloquy from Liberal writers of every degree. The arguments for condemning the Government are not very convincing. "The statesman,"

[1] See Report of the House of Lords Committee of Secrecy, *Annual Register*, 1817, pp. 6–12.

[2] House of Commons Report. Ibid., p. 14.

says one of the more moderate historians of this period, "who opposes himself to the demands of the people, may achieve a temporary success, but the strength of numbers must always assert its power at last. Arbitrary government may succeed for a time, but it must ultimately be subverted by the power of the people."[1] Here is *laissez-faire* with a witness! It is easy to represent Ministers as panic-stricken by the bogey of Revolution; not so easy to show that their precautions were exaggerated. Men who had steered the country through twenty years of war may be held to have given some proof of nerve. The resources at their command did not include electricity for the transmission of warning and instruction, nor steam for the transport of troops; disturbance in distant quarters might run to fatal issues before succour could be either asked or supplied; was it not, then, common prudence to be beforehand with persons known to be meditating outrage? Strip government of its trappings and circumlocutions, and you will find the kernel of the whole concern to be the primitive obligation to protect life and property, from internal as much as from external assault. It is admitted, surely, that in times of civil unrest the Executive must be empowered to arrest dangerous individuals and to detain them without trial. Which can be done only in one of three ways—first, by obtaining special statutory powers beforehand, as Mr. Gladstone did in 1881 for the government of Ireland; second, by breaking the law of Habeas Corpus and coming to Parliament afterwards for an Act of Indemnity; third, by suspending temporarily the Habeas Corpus Act of 1679. Lord Liverpool's Government chose the last and, as seems to me, the simplest course; and, in so doing, received the "cordial though reluctant support" of Lord Grenville, leader of the Whigs, although Lord Grey and most of the Opposition voted the other way.

After all, the risk of repressive legislation lies in the manner in which it may be administered. Ministers cannot be shown to have used their extraordinary powers tyrannically. The authority above quoted indeed declares, in a sentence

[1] Sir S. Walpole's *England*, i. 432.

of somewhat Hibernian cast, that "the Act had no sooner been suspended than the more violent members of the Tory party insisted on its vigorous use";[1] but he is unable to cite a single instance of injustice or oppression. On the contrary, he shows that a rising which had been arranged to take place on the night of 30th March simultaneously in Manchester, Lancaster, Leicester, and several other manufacturing towns, was frustrated by the apprehension of the ringleaders. "This simple precaution disconcerted the conspirators, and the rising was postponed"—to the 9th June; and, "the arrest of some of the ringleaders at Huddersfield on the 6th of June disconcerted the plans of the conspirators."[2] So it was with the demonstration remembered—or forgotten—as the march of the Blanketeers. Several thousands of unemployed assembled at Manchester on 10th March for the purpose of going afoot to London with a petition to the Prince Regent against the suspension of the Habeas Corpus Act. Every man was to carry a blanket; all were recommended to carry arms, although only a few appear to have done so,[3] and assurances were given that their numbers would be increased to 100,000 before they reached London, by contingents from Scotland and Yorkshire. On Sunday the 9th some stump orators were arrested while haranguing the crowd; that evening four organisers of the movement were taken in custody. Next morning the march began; but it was interrupted at Stockport by a troop of the Life Guards and some yeomanry, who carried forty of the pilgrims back to Manchester. Deprived of their leaders, the ranks rapidly thinned. Out of the many thousands who had mustered in the morning, not more than a score persisted further than the border of Lancashire.

The march of the Blanketeers, 10th March 1817.

Wisely as we must pronounce the Government to have exerted their arbitrary authority, it must be allowed that they were badly advised by the Law Officers of the Crown in arraigning twenty-four rioters of Huddersfield on the

[1] Sir S. Walpole's *England*, i. 439. [2] Ibid., 443.
[3] House of Lords Committee of Secrecy, 2nd Report: *Annual Register*, 1817, p. 68.

grandiloquent charge of high-treason. As in the trial of the Spa Fields rioters, so again at York, no conviction could be obtained. Brandreth, leader of a riot at Derby, might have been charged simply with murder, for he had shot with his own hand a householder who dared to resist him when he demanded arms; but Brandreth and two of his comrades were charged with levying war against the King, were convicted, and suffered on the gallows.

If such high legal authorities as the Lord Chancellor, the Attorney and Solicitor Generals, erred in committing the Government to a course unintelligible to plain men, humbler dignitaries may be pardoned for fallibility in administering the Act against seditious meetings. There will always be Dogberrys on the bench, and some just irritation was caused by the refusal of certain magistrates to license perfectly harmless meetings. But it is childish to blame the Government for such proceedings, or to condemn their measure because the Vice-Chancellor of Cambridge University chose to misuse it for the suppression of the Union Debating Society, and certain London aldermen managed to stop a licence to the respectable and wholly innocuous Academical Society, on the ground that the intention of the Act was "to put down all political debate whatever."[1]

In dealing with another set of offences, Ministers got into a more undignified mess than in the abortive prosecution of rioters. In March 1817 the Home Secretary, Lord Sidmouth, called the attention of lords-lieutenant of counties to the frequency of scurrilous and blasphemous publications circulating in the country, informed them that the law officers of the Crown were of opinion that justices of the peace might issue warrants for the apprehension of persons charged with publishing such libels, and desired them to recommend magistrates to act accordingly. The first consequence of this was the trial in the Court of King's Bench of one Wooler, the printer and publisher of an obscure rag called *The Black Dwarf*, in which, as the Attorney-General stated for the prosecution, appeared

Prosecution of the Radical Press, March 1817.

[1] *Annual Register*, 1817. Chron., p. 33.

such statements as that the Ministers, "when they talked of patriotism, meant plunder," and that in making war against France they had aimed at conquering, not that country, but "ourselves." This, he argued, constituted "a gross, scandalous, and seditious libel, calculated to bring the government of the country into contempt." Strangely as it may read in our ears, the judge, Abbot, in charging the jury, supported this view; but some, at least, of the jurymen were of stubborn English common-sense, and refused to agree in a verdict of guilty.[1] In another trial the prosecution succeeded; Williams, a printer of Portsea, was sentenced to a fine of £100 and twelve months' imprisonment for publishing a parody on the Athanasian Creed. In the last of these lamentable State trials the Government earned well-merited discomfiture, as well as ridicule, such as no public men can afford to do. Hone, editor of the useful *Every Day Book*, underwent three separate trials for publishing parodies on various parts of the Liturgy, and was acquitted by successive special juries, in the very teeth of passionate charges by Lord Chief-Justice Ellenborough.

However, Ministers did not confine themselves to repressive legislation: they showed praiseworthy activity both in providing for the encouragement of thrift and for lightening the burden of taxation. The most sanguine philanthropist cannot have anticipated the effect of two Acts passed in 1817, too insignificant to receive notice in the *Annual Register*, which devoted many pages to the debates on the Habeas Corpus Suspension Bill. The Acts in question authorised the formation of trustee savings banks in England and Ireland—banks to be conducted for the benefit of depositors, deducting from the deposits no more than enough to pay management expenses, but "deriving no benefit from such deposits or the produce thereof." Defoe had propounded the idea so long before as 1697; by the end of the eighteenth century savings banks had been established in several European

The Savings Banks Acts, 1817.

[1] Well might Mr. Wynn observe to Lord Buckingham: "It would have been a dangerous precedent to convict a man for selling what has been repeatedly published at every period" (*Memoirs of the Regency*, ii. 201).

towns. The first in England was started in 1799 by the Rev. J. Smith, rector of Wendover, who, with two other trustees, undertook to receive from his parishioners weekly payments of not less than 2d., and to add the sum of 1s. 3d. to every deposit which remained undisturbed till Christmas. But it is a Scottish clergyman, the Rev. Henry Duncan, minister of Ruthwell, who is most generally honoured as the "Father of Savings Banks"; for it was he who in 1810 first established one of these concerns on a business-like and durable footing. The project found little favour with the Radicals; it was a reform not half drastic enough to please them; for although Whitbread had advocated the establishment of savings banks under Government control, William Cobbett sneered at the scheme as "a bubble."[1] Yet the seed thus sown bore abundant fruit. The crop of 1861, the year following the establishment of the Post Office Savings Bank, consisted of 1,609,102 depositors, or 6 per cent. on a population of 28,927,485, with aggregate deposits to the amount of £41,542,229. At the end of 1905 the number of depositors in Trustees' Savings Banks was 1,731,869, to whom £52,723,436 was due by the banks; while the Post Office Savings Bank had 9,963,049 depositors with an aggregate credit of £152,111,140.

Howbeit in 1817 the benefits of savings banks were all prospective. These infant institutions availed not against the instant distress, and Government came to the rescue, issuing £750,000 Exchequer bills to be advanced to local authorities for relief works and the encouragement of fisheries.

Retrenchment in public expenditure, 1817–18.

The army and navy establishments, already reduced in a degree which could be considered prudent only in view of the prevailing military anæmia of Europe, were ruthlessly cut down still further, and action was taken upon the report of the Finance Committee appointed to consider the further abolition of sinecures. That report showed how salaries to the amount of £100,000 a year were still paid in regard to offices which involved no active duties whatever. It should be understood that these sinecure

[1] *Parliamentary Register*, 4th Jan. 1817.

places, although frequently bestowed upon persons who had rendered little or no service to the public, served also in lieu of pensions for those who had earned substantial recognition in discharge of important duties. Power, therefore, was taken for the Sovereign to award such pensions in future to an amount not exceeding one-half of the cost of useless offices abolished. The Prince Regent showed practical sympathy with the general distress by surrendering to the public use one-fifth of his income, or £50,000 a year (it might be ungenerous to inquire too closely whether this sacrifice was marked by a corresponding decrease in his expenditure), and members of the Government "were also," Castlereagh told the House of Commons, "anxious to offer their assistance by contributing what the property tax, had it been continued, would have taken from them"—namely, 5 per cent. on their salaries.

By means of such expedients the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Mr. Vansittart, had he been so minded, might have produced a budget showing a surplus of 1¼ million; but he could not bring himself to give up a paper reduction of debt. He declined to suspend the Sinking Fund, which, with the Navy and Transport Debt, absorbed £16,124,443 out of a gross revenue of 52 millions, and left him an estimated deficit of nearly 16 millions. Note, there was no talk of reviving the property tax, as the income tax was then termed. It was reserved for Sir Robert Peel (Secretary for Ireland in 1817) to revive it in 1842, and assign it a place among the permanent imposts.

Brief revival of trade, 1818.

Better times were at hand. No feature is more familiar to business men than the periodicity of commercial activity and depression. The country had been undergoing the natural reaction from the inflation of war prices. The trough of the wave had been deeper than common, the distress more severe, for the bad harvest of 1816 had destroyed the only compensating feature in dull times—the cheap loaf. The fine autumn and abundant harvest of 1817 redressed that; wheat fell from 103s. in January of that year to 85s. in January 1818; and Consols, the pulse of the country, rallied from 63 to 80 in the same period; employment

became brisk, wages rose, the political agitator's occupation fell flat, and Habeas Corpus was restored on 1st March.

Lord Liverpool was lucky to take advantage of what proved but a fleeting gleam of prosperity by appealing to the constituencies at midsummer. Despite what has been said above in justification of the extraordinary measures adopted by Ministers for restoring order, it cannot be denied that the special Acts, particularly the one restricting the right of public meeting, had been intensely unpopular with the mass of the people. Had the working classes possessed the franchise, the old Government must have received emphatic notice to quit; instead of which, they returned to power acknowledging a net loss of only fourteen seats, counting twenty-eight on a division.[1]

Confusion of the Opposition, 1818.

The Opposition, numerical increase notwithstanding, had suffered severely of late in fighting power, and, besides, were at sixes and sevens about their leadership in the House of Commons. Since Grey, Lord Howick, had been wafted to the House of Lords in 1807, that office had been discharged creditably, if not brilliantly, by George Ponsonby, once Lord Chancellor of Ireland in the Talents Ministry. But Ponsonby died, stricken in years, in 1817; and, by a cruel fatality, of four men, not so stricken, who had been marked as fitted to succeed him, three had died since the close of the great war. Samuel Whitbread, the brewer, worried into acute brain disease by losses over theatrical speculation, into which he had plunged on the faith of Sheridan's dramatic genius, cut his throat on 6th July 1815. Sir Samuel Romilly broke down under combined pressure of professional work, the excitement of the general election, and grief for the loss of an excellent wife; he, too, put an end to his existence, 2nd November 1818. Lastly, Francis Horner, most able of economists, had disappointed high expectations by dying of consumption at the age of eight-and-thirty.[2] Remained, only George Tierney (for Sheridan,

[1] The Opposition claimed to have gained twenty to thirty seats.

[2] So highly was Horner esteemed by men of all parties, that when news of his death at Pisa, February 1817, arrived, the House of Commons adjourned its sitting, and afterwards voted him the statue by Chantrey in Westminster Abbey.

once the rival in debate of Fox himself, had fallen to a lamentable level)—Tierney, who had stepped into the place vacated by Fox in 1798 and, as Whig leader, had fought a bloodless duel with Pitt on Wimbledon Common —Mr. Speaker Abbot looking on! Tierney, by experience of Parliament, fearless speech, and quick sense of humour, was better qualified than any other man of his party for the lead;[1] yet his selection pleased neither wing of the Opposition. The Grenvillites, with true Whig hauteur, disdained to follow a man of no family, enriched as he was by trading; the "Mountain" distrusted him as a temporiser and "the adviser behind the curtain of the Whigs and Grenvilles."[2] Never was there brave man worse backed by his followers; they abused him behind his back, flouted him to his face in the House, and schemed to form an independent party.[3] "Nothing is so decided, thank God!" wrote W. H. Fremantle to Lord Buckingham, "as our separation from the Opposition. . . . Our companions are as yet few, but I am confident they will increase daily."

Wellington joins the Cabinet, Nov. 1818.

The autumn of 1818 brought a notable recruit to the Liverpool Cabinet. The Duke of Wellington, having wound up affairs on the Continent and bidden farewell to the army of occupation, accepted civil office as Master General of the Ordnance. In the prime of life—he had not passed his fiftieth year—his service had been so incessant and arduous that none might have murmured had he sheathed his good sword and sought well-earned repose. Many are of opinion that he would have acted best in doing so, and that if the assassin Cantillon, who, on 10th February in that same year, fired at the Duke in the Rue des Champs Elysées, had held better aim, Wellington, like Nelson, would have been struck down at the zenith of his career, and, so dying,

[1] When the question of a new leader for the Opposition had been discussed in 1810, Speaker Abbot noted in his diary (surely the driest extract of stirring times that ever was distilled): "Ponsonby reinstated in the nominal lead of the opposition; Tierney the efficient man on that side" (Lord Colchester's *Diary*, ii. 225).

[2] *Creevey Papers*, i. 114, 124, 247, 290, &c.

[3] Ibid., 327, 330. See also *Memoirs of the Regency*.

would have left the world without his counterpart. He who had vanquished *le vainqueur des vainqueurs*—he whom the Powers of Europe had acknowledged as the only arbiter of their angry affairs—was now to be drawn into the murky vortex of domestic politics, with such effect upon his renown as might be wrought in the corrosive atmosphere of party.

It is not well to anticipate; but—seeing that Liberals remember the Duke of Wellington as a hopeless reactionary in politics, withholding with cold tenacity those reforms to which the nation had made up its mind, and that Tories still bear him a grudge for having, while in power, twice surprised them into a line of policy to which, as a party, they had vowed resistance, and for his repeated refusal in opposition to lead attacks having for sole purpose the discredit and overthrow of the Government of the day—it may help, I say, to an understanding of the man's principles of conduct, and of the manner of his influence upon the course of affairs from this point, to recall the conditions upon which he overcame his reluctance to accept office in the Government.[1] They are set forth in his letter to Lord Liverpool accepting office with a grimace ("I shall make no objection to the appointment taking place," was all he could bring himself to say).

"I don't doubt that the party of which the present Government is the head will give me credit for being sincerely attached to them and their interests; but I hope that, in case any circumstance should occur to remove them from power, they will allow me to consider myself at liberty to take any line I may at the time think proper. The experience which I have acquired during my long service abroad has convinced me that a factious opposition to the government is highly injurious to the interests of the country; and, thinking as I do now, I could not become a party to such opposition, and I wish that this may be clearly understood by those persons with whom I am now about to engage as a colleague in government. I can easily conceive that this feeling of mine may, in the opinion of some, render me less eligible as a colleague, and I beg that, if this should be the case, the offer you have so kindly made to me may be considered as not made."[2]

[1] As to the Duke's reluctance to take office, see a passage from Lady Salisbury's MS. journal, quoted in the author's *Life of Wellington*, ii. 141.

[2] Wellington's *Supplementary Despatches*, xii. 813.

The revival of trade had done more for the cause of order than all the repressive measures of the Government; unluckily it proved to be fleeting. The demand for manufactures suddenly fell off, reacting upon the coal trade, causing a general drop in wages, as well as the too familiar phenomenon of thousands of willing workers with no work to do. Bankruptcies in England were more numerous in 1818 by 35 per cent. than in 1817. The one saving feature in the case was the relatively low price of wheat—average, 73s. 6d. instead of 94s. 4½d. The distress, therefore, was less acute than in the former year; but discontent was as rife as before, and focussed itself in earnest upon a definite object—parliamentary reform.

Renewed depression, 1818.

No need, usually, to seek below the surface of things for the agent in the familiar ebb and flow in the tide of commerce and production. But this abrupt industrial collapse in 1818 was abnormal, betokening deep-rooted mischief, originating in 1797, a year of acute commercial panic, when a run upon the banks threatened to bring all credit to the ground with a crash. On Saturday, 25th February 1797, the directors of the Bank of England had not enough cash in their coffers to meet the demands which they had reason to expect would be presented on Monday 27th. Therefore on Sunday 26th out flew an Order in Council, prohibiting further payments in cash until Parliament should have deliberated on the matter. Parliament sanctioned the suspension, on condition that cash payment should be resumed six months after the war—that is, that the Bank should be under obligation to redeem its paper at par six months after the conclusion of peace. The public accepted the situation with so much confidence that Bank of England notes bore par value with gold for two or three years following. Relying upon this confidence, the directors increased their issue to such an extent—from about 17 millions in 1808 to 22½ millions in 1810—as to bring about serious depreciation in their paper.

Suspension of cash payments, 26th Feb. 1797.

A discount of 16 per cent. on Bank of England notes in 1810 (increased to 25 per cent. in 1814) represented

only part of the depreciation; for gold, hitherto steady at the price of £4 an ounce, suddenly rose to £4, 10s. Here, it seemed, was the first pinch of a gold famine. The political upheaval of the Spanish and Portuguese colonies had cut off the supply from South America, sole source of the world's bullion in those days.

The effect of this in the United Kingdom was very disquieting. In the three years 1814–16, no fewer than two hundred and forty country banks stopped payment. The withdrawal of their notes from circulation had the unforeseen result of enhancing in value those of the Bank of England, which in 1817 stood once more at par, or nearly so. Now was a favourable time to resume cash payment, which, according to parliamentary pledge, ought to have been done at the beginning of 1816; but action was postponed until 1819, when Mr. (afterwards Sir Robert) Peel's Act was passed, providing for such resumption in 1823. This delay was granted in order to mitigate the hardship of such debtors as might have to liquidate in gold or notes at par liabilities incurred in a depreciated paper currency. As to the Bank of England, it had accumulated such heavy reserves as enabled the directors to resume payments in specie from 1st May 1821.[1] The indulgence thus accorded to the Bank of England had been severely criticised by economists. Francis Horner's committee in 1811 was appointed to consider the propriety of resuming cash payments at once, a course which Horner had earnestly recommended to Parliament; but the war drain made it impossible at that time, and the House of Commons, on the motion of Vansittart, Chancellor of the Exchequer, declared Bank paper to be equivalent in value to gold, and, as such, to be legal tender. But no fiat of Parliament can make bank-notes more than a mere promise to pay in precious metal, or prevent their value fluctuating according to the prospect of that promise being redeemed. So long as the Bank of England held bullion in fair proportion to its issue, no inconvenience arose; its paper, at home and abroad, was "as good as gold."

[1] On 30th January 1819 the Bank's liabilities stood at £33,894,580, its assets at £39,096,900.

But when France was relieved from the army of occupation in 1818, she appeared in the market as a borrower on a large scale. Simultaneously the other great Powers began to ask for money; the exchanges turned against London, and gold began to flow away. Its price rose to £4, 3s. an ounce, and the commerce of the country suffered the ill effects of an inconvertible, yet fluctuating, paper currency.[1]

The mischief was aggravated by Vansittart's financial measures. Wedded to his darling scheme of paying off debt with one hand and incurring it with the other, he chose to swamp a practical surplus of two millions in twenty-four millions which he demanded for the service of the debt. Half of this he obtained by issuing a public loan of twelve millions; the other half he proposed to borrow from the sinking fund, a perplexing and illusory project which he had to supplement by three millions of additional taxes. Trade, already staggering, was ill able to bear heavier burdens, and the duty on foreign wool, raised from 6s. 8d. to 56s. a cwt., went far to paralyse one of the principal industries.

As the summer wore on the distress deepened, furnishing political agitators with crowded audiences drawn from the unemployed, willing listeners to schemes for dethroning King Log and crowning King Stork. Meetings in the Midlands and northern counties passed over, as a rule, with no result further than fiery orations and resolutions in favour of the articles in the Radical charter, *plus* abolition of the corn laws. But as times grew ever harder, employment ever more scarce, an angry spirit spread through the suffering masses. Petitions to Parliament, their only constitutional means of expression, were a farce, for Parliament itself was a sham, as Orator Hunt had explained from a hundred platforms. It hardly needed explanation. A re-

[1] One evil inseparable from a paper currency is the facilities offered to forgers. During six years, 1812–18, 131,361 notes, varying in value from £1 to £20, were detected as forgeries. In the twenty-one years following the suspension of cash payments by the Bank, February 1797–February 1818, 313 persons were sentenced to death for forgery; whereas during the fourteen years preceding the suspension, 1783–96, only three persons had been convicted of that crime.

presentative legislature to which Dunwich,[1] from beneath the waters of the German Ocean, and Old Sarum, consisting of *a single inhabited house*,[2] each returned two members, while populous places remained unrepresented —Birmingham with 97,000 inhabitants, Manchester with 112,000, Leeds and Sheffield with over 50,000 each—such a legislature was a sham in all eyes but its own. There be harmless shams that hurt no men while gratifying some; let dukes and earls enjoy their innocuous dignities, though one should be wary of taking every duke—*dux*—as leader, and disappointment is his lot who expects every earl to act the hero—*eorl*. But there are hurtful shams that we are bent upon ending, seeing they will not let us mend them, and of such is our House of Commons. Outspoken Sir Francis Burdett has addressed it to its face as an assembly "falsely denominating itself the Commons House of Parliament."[3] Is it not a vicious sham, this chamber which has just rejected by 153 votes to 58, in a contemptuously thin house, Burdett's motion that in the following session it should take into consideration the state of the representation?

Agitation for Parliamentary Reform, 1819.

Such were the reflections in the minds of men to whom enforced idleness gave plenty of time for meditation —such the object to which their leaders directed their aim; practical enough, reasonable enough, but like to turn dangerous unless timely heed were paid to their complaint. Failing that, or any signs of it, Birmingham led the way by holding a popular election, under direction of Major Cartwright, so-called "Father of Reform." Sir Charles Wolseley, a baronet of Staffordshire, was elected "legislatorial attorney" for the town, and proceeded, as "member for Birmingham," to make an inflammatory harangue at Stockport. The authorities interposed; Wolseley was arrested, and Constable Birch, who had him in charge, was shot by the mob. At Manchester

[1] Dunwich, in Suffolk, once a town of eight parishes, surrounded by walls and gates, was gradually encroached upon by the sea until, in 1808, not a single church was left, and only 184 inhabitants.

[2] In Wiltshire. The see was removed to Salisbury in 1219.

[3] Hansard, xxxv. 317.

matters took a still more desperate turn. The people were summoned to assemble on 16th August, Orator Hunt presiding, for the purpose of following the example of Birmingham in the election of a "member." St. Peter's Field was the appointed place, an open space on the outskirts of the city, whither 50,000 people or so marched in more or less military formation. There had been a good deal of preliminary drilling; the magistrates were alert and on the ground; the Yeomanry had been called out, special constables sworn in, and some regular cavalry was at hand; but it does not appear that there was any intention to interfere with the meeting if the oratory stopped short of sedition. The magistrates were assembled in a house close to the field, a line of constables being posted so as to communicate to them what was said on the platform. Now this platform was a movable one, erected upon two or three wagons. The Radical leaders, desiring to thwart the arrangement of the magistrates, did so by the simple manœuvre of wheeling the wagons to another part of the ground. Consequently, no sooner did Hunt begin his address than the magistrates ordered his arrest. The Yeomanry, riding in single file as escort to the constables, were roughly handled in the crowd, many of them being unhorsed. Mr. Hulton, the senior magistrate, in some flurry, poor gentleman, called upon Colonel l'Estrange to rescue them and disperse the crowd. It was no question of single file with l'Estrange; "his not to reason why." He wheeled up a couple of troops of the 15th Hussars, men who had ridden with Uxbridge at Quatre Bras and Waterloo, and sounded the charge. Now a cavalry charge, especially upon an unarmed crowd, is not an affair of rose-water. No sabre was fleshed, but there was an ugly crush. Many people were badly hurt, and six of them, including a baby in arms, lost their lives.

The "Peterloo" Riot, 16th Aug. 1819.

The troops were execrated for their part in this "Massacre of Peterloo"; but, after all, as soldiers they had but obeyed their orders. The responsibility lay with the magistrates; it was against them that indignant demonstrations took place in London and the great provincial

towns; it is against their alleged unconstitutional hindrance of the right of public meeting that the Liberal writers declaim to this day. Such is too often the reward of those who take preventive measures. Here was a mass of malcontents who had been drilling assiduously for weeks, marching under banners inscribed with sanguinary sentiments, assembled to listen to men whose open purpose was the overthrow of Crown and Parliament—in no other country in Europe would such a meeting be allowed to proceed unhindered, even at this day, when popular rights have obtained liberal recognition. It is only Englishmen, rightly and nobly, if somewhat nervously, jealous of their personal liberty, who would dispute the discretion of the magistrates in interfering as they did. By employing the Hussars promptly to disperse the gathering, they probably averted a much greater sacrifice of life than that which actually took place. That, at least, was the view taken by such of the Cabinet as happened to be in London. On 19th August the Prince Regent signed a letter expressing his "approbation and high commendation" of the conduct "of magistrates, troops, and civil authorities"—words which had a powerful effect in regulating the action of magistrates in other parts of the country.

The right of public meeting.

It must be owned that upon the technical point of the legality of meetings ostensibly held for the discussion of political grievances, high authorities were at variance of opinion. Even Eldon, bold Tory as he was, considered "the state of our law inapplicable to existing circumstances, and that we can't meet the present case."[1] The circumstances and the case were considered so grave that Parliament was summoned to meet on 23rd November. Meanwhile Ministers continued to act on Lord Eldon's opinion "that numbers constitute force, force terror, and terror illegality," and proved that, in so doing, they were no respecters of persons. Lord Fitzwilliam, one of the weightiest Whig magnates, King's lieutenant of one of the most important counties of England—the West Riding of York—convened a meeting at York to take the proceedings at Manchester into con-

[1] Twiss's *Life of Eldon*, i. 581.

sideration. Twenty thousand persons responded to the summons on 14th October; perfect order prevailed, and resolutions were passed praying for an inquiry. Now Lord Fitzwilliam as a private gentleman might have held and expressed what views he pleased upon the expediency of an inquiry, but as Lord-Lieutenant he was bound to respect the opinion given in the Prince Regent's letter. Consequently, on the 21st a messenger was sent to Wentworth with a letter removing the great Whig earl from his office—"a necessary act of insulted authority," wrote Sidmouth to Eldon, adding, "We shall now be abused by our enemies; if we had shrunk from it, we should have been despised by our friends, and perhaps by our enemies too."[1]

Lord Fitzwilliam's dismissal, 21st Oct. 1819.

A good deal of truth in that last sentence. Many Whigs, as well as Tories, were blaming the Government more for want of promptness and vigour than for exceeding their powers. "The Radicals," wrote Brougham, "have made themselves so odious that a number, even of our own way of thinking, would be well enough pleased to see them and their vile press put down at all hazards." Lord Grenville viewed with deep distrust the attempt by some of his friends to make an operative alliance with revolutionaries, in the hope of diverting attacks upon rank and property. He communicated to the Prime Minister his views of the manner in which the law required strengthening—views which assuredly did not err in the direction of leniency.[2] Wilberforce, shocked by the affronts offered to religion by the agitators, was urgent for repressive measures, although he confessed privately that his support of authority might lessen his chances of help from the Opposition in the matter of the slave trade.[3] Grey in the Lords and Tierney in the Commons led against Ministers and their measures what forces were left to them after this defection; but their followers mustered thinly in the lobbies. The Government had little trouble in persuading Parliament to entrust it with the further powers demanded. These were embodied in six

[1] Ibid., i. 589.

[2] *Memoirs of the Regency*, ii. 359, 361.

[3] *Life of Wilberforce*, v. 36.

bills. The first was directed against unauthorised drilling. Remarkable, not that such a measure should be brought forward at the time, but that the country had been peaceably governed for so long without the power of regulating warlike exercises. The second bill merely provided for what all men admitted to be an improved method of procedure in trials for sedition. The third was an Arms Bill, empowering magistrates to order search for and seizure of unlicensed weapons. The fourth bill was directed against the publishers of seditious libels, and provided for the seizure of libellous matter, with banishment as the penalty for a second offence; the fifth brought pamphlets and broadsides under the same stamp duty as was borne by newspapers, and imposed upon every bookseller the obligation to find surety for the orderly conduct of his business. Finally, the sixth bill, limited to a term of five years, restricted the right of public meeting, "for the consideration of grievances in Church and State, or for the purpose of preparing petitions," to the inhabitants of separate parishes or townships. Only persons residing within the parish or township should be entitled to attend, and even they could only assemble after a notice of the meeting signed by seven inhabitants had been given to a magistrate, who might alter the date so as to prevent simultaneous meetings in neighbouring parishes. This, of course, put an end to the occupation of itinerant agitators; but the sting of the bill lay in its exemptions. Meetings summoned by the lord-lieutenant or high sheriff, by the mayor of corporate towns, or by five justices of the peace, were not interfered with; so that, whereas a moribund village like Corfe Castle retained untrammelled right of public meeting in virtue of its mayor and corporation,[1] the privilege hitherto deemed inherent in every British community was denied to great and growing cities like Manchester and Birmingham.

The Six Acts, Nov. 1819.

Castlereagh, as leader of the House of Commons, conducted these measures through their successive stages, and his memory has suffered reproach for what has been

[1] In 1808 the population of Corfe Castle was 1334. Probably it was even less in 1819.

pronounced harsh and tyrannical legislation; although if any Minister more than another was responsible for the provisions in "Castlereagh's Six Acts," it was Sidmouth, the Home Secretary. But were these Acts really more severe than the occasion justified? Were Eldon[1] and Redesdale, Grenville and Buckingham, mistaken when they declared that the existing laws were insufficient for good governance in the prevailing temper of the country? Two of these Acts—those first mentioned above—remain part of the machinery of government to this day; no good citizen is one whit the worse for them; nobody has cause to object to them except he who wishes to induce or compel others to be bad citizens. In the light of after days, Lord Liverpool's Cabinet may be censured for refusing to consider any appeals for parliamentary reform, especially for their refusal to entertain any proposal to confer seats forfeited for bribery upon the great and growing manufacturing towns; but the loudest advocacy of such remedial measures came from the same lips that preached force as the only remedy, thereby repelling many sober intellects from the cause of popular representation. People who write so confidently about the measures of the ministry as "reprehensible" and their opposition to sweeping changes in the constitution as "blind," have not realised the circumstances of men who, having brought their country safely through a period of unparallelled external danger, hesitated, and finally refused, to entrust its destiny to the inexperienced multitude. The advocates of moderate and timely reform are not always careful to keep their plans distinct from those of the projectors of revolution.

The Cato Street Conspiracy, Feb. 1820.

The Six Acts had not been many weeks on the Statute Book before events occurred to justify their authors in the eyes of the public. Among the most violent of Radical agitators was one Arthur Thistlewood, once an officer in a militia regiment, who had imbibed extreme revolutionary doctrines from Paine's writings and studied the practical application of them during a residence in Paris. Returning to England

[1] "As sure as I am living, nothing but Parliament can attempt a remedy for the present evils" (Lord Eldon to Sir W. Scott: Twiss, i. 588).

in 1814, he was one of the organisers of the Spa Field riot in 1817, and was arrested in 1818 during the suspension of Habeas Corpus. On his release he challenged the Home Secretary to a duel with sword or pistol, for which he was sentenced to a year's imprisonment. Regaining his freedom, Thistlewood took an active part in the Peterloo meeting, and finding his scope as an agitator curtailed under the Six Acts, formed a secret directory pledged to the destruction of the Government. Their plans included the assassination of Ministers, the firing of public buildings, and the formation of a provisional government. Wednesday, 23rd February, was the day fixed for action, when it was known that a cabinet dinner was to take place at Lord Harrowby's house in Grosvenor Square. Fourteen men were told off, armed with hand-grenades and other weapons; one was to ring the bell while the party were at dinner; the rest were to rush in when the door was opened and massacre all in the dining-room.

This plan was revealed in all its details by an informer. Wellington was for the dinner party to go on; a party of constables being concealed in the house, and every Minister to carry a brace of loaded pistols, to shoot the fellows down withal as they entered the room. For once the Duke's tactics were disapproved: his colleagues may be acquitted of cowardice in overruling him. Those of them who had not quite forgotten the art of handling "the barkers" might entertain reasonable misgiving about some of the others as marksmen. With so many bullets flying about, some might have found unintended billets. The dinner preparations were allowed to proceed in Grosvenor Square, but another dinner was cooked in Downing Street, where the Ministers assembled; while Mr. Birnie, Bow Street magistrate, went with fourteen constables to arrest the gang in Cato Street, where they had their den.[1] A company of Guards that was to have supported him did not arrive till a desperate struggle had taken place, in which one constable was killed and three others wounded; but they came on the ground in time to capture most of

[1] Cato Street was a narrow lane, now obliterated, running into John Street parallel with the Edgeware Road.

the conspirators, of whom five were hanged, including Thistlewood.[1]

Before the Cato Street ruffians were brought to trial, an attempt at revolution or rebellion in Scotland was promptly suppressed by the local authorities. In the early hours of Sunday, 2nd April, a proclamation was posted up in Glasgow and the neighbouring villages calling upon the people to rise and establish "a revolution by force." Next morning the streets were patrolled by pickets who compelled all men, under threats of violence, to desist from work, and so brought the business of the city to a stand for several hours. Now, what must have happened had the Government not been firm in support of the Manchester magistrates and approved of their action in the Peterloo affair? Undoubtedly the Glasgow magistrates would have hesitated to incur the displeasure which, if the party of Grey and Tierney had prevailed, would have been the reward of vigorous measures. This fire kindled in Clydesdale would have gathered strength and spread to other districts, where there was plenty of inflammable material to feed it. The Government would have had a rebellion to deal with, instead of merely initial stages of terrorism and riot. As it was, the authorities showed their teeth at once, and, with one trifling exception, had no occasion to use them. These Scottish rioters melted away at the first glitter of steel; only at Bonnymuir, near Falkirk, did some thirty of them attempt a stand—Radical weavers, armed with pikes. A party of two-and-twenty Hussars and Yeomanry summoned them to surrender; they resisted fiercely; one of the soldiers was killed. Nineteen of these crazy fellows were captured and tried; two were executed and the rest were transported.

Disturbance in Scotland, April 1820.

One of the most conscientious, but most partisan, chroniclers of these times, while condemning the Six Acts as "feeble barriers of the governing classes," is too candid not to admit that "the power of the agitators had consisted in the terror which their proceedings had inspired; their power ceased the moment that it was seen that the autho-

[1] It is said that Thistlewood at the foot of the gallows made the following prayer: "Oh God—if there be a God—save my soul—if I have a soul!"

rities were not afraid of them."[1] Be it remembered that there was then, as there is not now, a governing class—inherently, not arbitrarily, part of the constitutional system—whose primary duty it was to maintain order.

The prevailing want of employment and consequent distress suited the purpose of the Cartwrights and Hunts, the Edwardses and Thistlewoods, the Burdetts and Cobbetts—of all who desired to overturn or modify the constitution, or even merely to embarrass the Government—to proclaim their several remedies and to persuade the populace that their hardships were the effect of bad laws; as if universal suffrage could have filled empty bellies or annual parliaments secured remunerative employment. The unsettled condition of the country during the five years after the great war arose from economic, not political, causes. Lord Liverpool's Government, and the section of Whig Opposition which supported them, deserve to be held in grateful remembrance for the firmness with which they staved off vast constitutional changes until matters had settled again into equilibrium. Instead of this, posterity has been invited to judge them unfavourably as men who deliberately chose coercion instead of conciliation.

The error into which Eldon, Wellington and the old school were betrayed in the years to come was that these changes could be and ought to be indefinitely staved off; but there were men among their colleagues who had a glimmering, at least, of the forces which were gathering outside the governing families. Pitt had perceived them forty years before, and had designed to incorporate them in the national life; but his purpose had been whirled to nought in the European hurricane. In a clearer atmosphere Peel now discerned the approach of irresistible change.

"Do not you think," he wrote to Croker in March 1820, "that there is a feeling in favour of some undefined change in the mode of governing the country? It seems to me a curious crisis—when public opinion never had such influence on public measures, and yet never was so dissatisfied with the share which it possessed. It is growing too large for the channels that it has been accus-

[1] Sir S. Walpole's *England*, i. 530, 532.

tomed to run through. God knows, it is very difficult to widen them exactly in proportion to the size and force of the current which they have to convey, but the engineers who made them never dreamt of various streams that are now struggling for a vent."[1]

And what Peel saw to-day, many persons perceived on the morrow. But the magnitude of it all—the novelty of the experiment—the plunge into the untried!

[1] *Croker Papers*, i. 170.

CHAPTER X

Death of George III.—The "Delicate Inquiry"—Henry Brougham—Second inquiry into the conduct of the Princess of Wales—Princess Charlotte of Wales—Her engagement to the Prince of Orange—The engagement broken off—Flight of Princess Charlotte—The "Milan Commission"—Death of Princess Charlotte—Report of the Milan Commission—The question of the Liturgy—Queen Caroline returns to England—The Bill of Pains and Penalties—Trial of Queen Caroline—The Bill abandoned—Mr. Canning resigns office—Death of Queen Caroline—Disturbance at her funeral.

THE stringent measures with which Parliament had strengthened the Executive; the steady encouragement with which Ministers supported the magistrates in coping with disorder; above all, the return of better times to all industries except agriculture, had relieved Lord Liverpool's Government from a very threatening aspect of affairs: but they were presently plunged in a dilemma even more embarrassing than the maintenance of civil order. George III. died on 29th January 1820, in the eighty-second year of his life and the sixtieth of his reign. In ordinary circumstances the event would have carried slight political importance; for nine years past the old King had been totally severed by blindness and insanity from all human intercourse, and the Prince Regent, virtually, had reigned in his stead. According to the constitutional practice of the time, the demise of the monarch involved the dissolution of Parliament, which took place in March. So far as a general election under the franchise of 1688 might be taken as a criterion, Ministers had not forfeited popularity in the degree which might have been expected. They returned to power with their majority in the House of Commons unimpaired. In a trial of strength upon an amendment moved by Brougham to the Civil List vote they defeated the Opposition by 273 votes to 155. Past difficulties had

Death of George III., 29th Jan. 1820.

their source among the unenfranchised classes; of those which they had to encounter now the sole cause was the Head of the State.

Lord Grenville, writing to his elder brother in 1814, passed some caustic reflections upon the "very ridiculous preparations for very foolish exhibitions of ourselves . . . in that character which least of all becomes us—that of courtly magnificence. Our kings never have, and I hope they never will be able to, come near their neighbours in that respect."[1] But who shall set an effective example of moderation in State pageants but the monarch himself? and what monarch ever lived less amenable to considerations of economy and prudence than George IV.? Parliament, with obsequious profusion, voted no less than £243,000 for the ceremony of his coronation,[2] which took place on 19th July 1821. No element of splendour was lacking on the occasion. A brand-new crown had been made at a cost of £54,000; the King's robes alone cost £24,000. The sun flashed bravely upon gorgeous uniforms, priceless diadems, and ropes of jewellery as the notables of the realm streamed under the portals of the old Abbey; the Church lent her stateliest ritual to the consecration of the Lord's Anointed; thereafter was Gargantuan feasting in Westminster Hall; nor might any stranger suspect that behind all this mingled solemnity and revel was being enacted the last scene of a long and squalid tragedy.

In the early freshness of that summer morning, between five and six o'olock, Caroline, Queen of England, with a suite of two gentlemen and two ladies, had driven to Westminster Abbey, demanded entrance, and received firm refusal, on the ground that she was not furnished with a ticket of admission. An episode in English history which one would fain bury out of sight; yet that may not be done, if men are to apprehend the depth of discredit into which the monarchy had been plunged, and of the difficulties to be overcome by Ministers, through many years of

[1] *Memoirs of the Regency*, ii. 75.

[2] Some curious reflections might arise upon a comparison of this lavish expenditure with the sum of £70,000 which sufficed for the inaugural ceremony of Queen Victoria's reign. To put the matter in grossly commercial phrase—which sovereign proved the better investment for the nation?

national peril, in defending the Constitution which owned such a deplorable head.

The story has its origin in the eighteenth century. Of the seven sons of George III. and Queen Charlotte, the eldest, George Frederick Augustus, was endowed by nature with excellent, perhaps superb, abilities, with extraordinary comeliness of person, and singularly charming manners. Add to these an ardent temperament, a facile disposition, a constitution enviably sound, and it required no more than firm principles of conduct to complete an ideal Prince. As fate befell, of such principles, from his youth onward, none could detect a trace. In their absence, the Prince of Wales's other qualities only inclined him to yield more easily to those forms of temptation which gather most closely round persons of high rank and wealth.

With this Prince's precocious profligacy, happily we have no concern, further than to note that at the age of three-and-twenty he married Mrs. Fitzherbert, a lady of great beauty and charm, of unblemished reputation, and in her second widowhood.[1]

Both the Prince and his bride knew full well that this marriage was constitutionally invalid, for the Royal Marriage Act of 1772 rendered void the union of any Prince of the Blood who had not completed his twenty-fifth year, unless with the consent of the Sovereign. Moreover, Mrs. Fitzherbert was a Roman Catholic, and the Act of Settlement provided that the heir-apparent, marrying a person of that religion, should forfeit his succession.

In 1787 the debts of the Prince of Wales had been paid by Parliament; in 1794 they had risen afresh to the figure of £640,000. The King made it a condition of another appeal to Parliament for relief that he should have the choosing of a bride for his heir, and the Prince saw no alternative but compliance. The wife provided for him was a first cousin whom he had never seen—Princess Caroline,

[1] Lord Stourton identified Mrs. Fitzherbert, who lived at Richmond, with the subject of that charming ballad "The Sweet Lass of Richmond Hill," on the strength of the line, "I'd crowns resign to call her mine," and Sir Spencer Walpole accepted the suggestion in his *History of England* (i. 247). But there are two Richmonds, and the heroine of the ballad was Miss Frances I'Anson of Hill House, Richmond, Yorkshire.

daughter of the Duke of Brunswick and George III.'s sister Augusta, a young lady of mediocre personal attractions, which she was at no pains to enhance by the aid of dress or refinement of manner. The Prince of Wales, who could not or would not conceal his distaste for the bride supplied for him, braced himself with brandy for the ceremony, and soon afterwards declined to live with his wife, to whom their only child, Princess Charlotte of Wales, was born on 7th January 1796. The Prince then resumed residence with Mrs. Fitzherbert, who, strange as it may seem, entertained a large and fashionable party at breakfast to celebrate the occasion. She had received through her confessor direct sanction from the Pope to consider herself, and to act as, the lawful wife of the Prince of Wales.

Thus cast off by her husband, Caroline, Princess of Wales, took up her abode in the suburbs of London, and by her total want of dignity and discretion gave rise to sinister rumours, which had their centre in a certain boy, "little Williken," whom she chose to adopt. The Prince, at that time an enthusiastic Whig, took occasion of the brief ministry of his political friends in 1806 to obtain the appointment of a secret commission to inquire into his wife's conduct. The commissioners—Lord Chancellor Erskine, Lord Spencer, Lord Grenville, and Lord Chief-Justice Ellenborough—reported on 14th July that they found there was "no foundation whatever" for the allegation that "little Williken" was the son of the Princess; he was proved to be the son of one Sophia Austin; but they reflected seriously upon the levity of the Princess's behaviour in general, and in particular upon "other circumstances stated to have passed between her Royal Highness and Captain Manby."

The "Delicate Inquiry," 1806.

Instead of acting upon this warning, Caroline, who was impulsive and warm-hearted, and utterly insensible to the dignity befitting her rank, flung prudence to the winds and brought upon herself another secret inquiry in the year 1813.

And now there becomes apparent the secret machinery underlying all this uncomely affair. From the first breach

between the ill-matched couple, popular sympathy had been strongly in favour of the Princess. She was the weaker party; people saw her supplanted, not only by Mrs. Fitzherbert, who at all events had a prior title to the Prince's consideration, but by a succession of other high-born dames whose presence made Carlton House a very focus of scandal. When the first inquiry was instituted the Prince of Wales was a Whig and the ministry was Whig; Sir Samuel Romilly, Whig Solicitor-General, was leading counsel for the prosecution, and Spencer Perceval, soon to become Tory Prime Minister, conducted the defence. Seven years later all the chief actors had exchanged parts. The Regent had thrown over his Whig allies and his cabinet was Tory through and through. The Whigs, at least the extreme section of them, perceiving the trend of public opinion, took up the cause of the Princess as eagerly as they had supported the action of the Prince in the former proceedings. No doubt many of them were genuinely convinced of her wrongs; but it is certain that revenge upon the Regent for betraying their party and desire to damage the Ministry were the dominant motives. If the conduct of the Princess had justified the Whigs in taking action against her in 1806, there was nothing in her subsequent course of life either to redeem the past or render further proceedings unreasonable.

To their credit be it spoken, Grenville, Grey, and their respective followings stood firmly aloof from this cynical manœuvre, thereby incurring the bitter animosity of "the Mountain." Romilly, in conducting the inquiry in 1806, had learnt too much about the Princess's character to undertake her defence now;[1] but she found a new champion whose brilliant talents were shackled by no scruples of conscience, no compunction of heart, in turning her follies

[1] "I cannot but wonder at the extraordinary success which has hitherto attended the bold, and what at first seemed the rash, steps which the Princess has taken. The publication of the depositions, taken in 1806, *would not, I think, fail to destroy her reputation for ever* in the opinion of the public; and yet she has repeatedly called for the publication of them. The ministers dare not produce them, because by so doing they would condemn themselves; and as they were not produced, she has, in the opinion of the public, the advantage of having it taken for granted that they would put her innocence beyond all question." (*Diary of Sir S. Romilly*, iii. 86.)

and misfortunes to account in the interest of faction. Henry Brougham, an advocate at the Scottish Bar and one of the founders of the *Edinburgh Review*, had entered Parliament in 1810 at the age of two-and-thirty, having registered a vow to keep silence until he had been a month in the House. He quickly indemnified himself for this act of self-restraint by frequent and vigorous speaking, so that by the end of his first session he had established a reputation as one of the foremost and most formidable of the advanced Whigs.[1]

Henry Brougham, 1778–1868.

So long as George III. had remained of sound mind he had refused to allow Princess Caroline to be separated from her daughter; but now the power had passed into the hands of the Regent, who forbade his wife to see her daughter more than once a fortnight. Discreet enough, such exercise of authority, considering the reckless character of the Princess of Wales; but the gross and open profligacy of her husband made it appear an act of heartless tyranny. Brougham was not in Parliament at this time, having been defeated by Canning in a contest for Liverpool at the general election of 1812; but he had by no means thrown up politics, and was prompt to take advantage of the situation. Acting upon his advice and that of the respectable and ponderous Whitbread, whom Brougham was shrewd enough to use as stalking-horse, the Princess wrote a long letter to her husband, setting forth her grievances and claiming redress. This letter having been returned to her several times unopened, she published it in the *Morning Chronicle* in January 1813. The effect was tremendous. Popular sympathy with the oppressed Princess spread like fire in heather; addresses of devotion flowed in from the Lord Mayor and Corporation of London and from scores of

[1] Brougham's political principles were elastic from the first. Dr. Currie of Liverpool, a good Whig and keen observer of politics, complains in 1804 of the attack made in the *Edinburgh Review* upon Lord Lauderdale's *Nature and Origin of Public Wealth*. "It is by a scatter-brained fellow, one Brougham. . . . He has got a sort of philosophical cant about him, and a way of putting obscure sentences together, which seem to fools to contain deep meaning. . . . He has been taken up, I am told, by Wilberforce, and is paying his court to Pitt. He is a notorious prostitute, and is setting himself up for sale." (*Creevey Papers*, i. 30.)

places in the provinces. Queen Charlotte, having refused to receive her daughter-in-law at Court, was hissed in the streets. So was the Regent, greatly to Brougham's delight. "Let me console you," he wrote to Creevey, "with the news that the fellow was hissed to-day going to Court, and hooted loudly. All this is good."[1]

Second inquiry into the conduct of the Princess of Wales, 1813.

The scandal was past endurance. Another secret inquiry into the Princess's conduct was committed to three-and-twenty Privy Councillors, who, by 21 votes to 2, supported the Prince Regent's authority in restricting the intercourse between mother and daughter.

Next followed a letter, drafted by Brougham, from the Princess to the Speaker, appealing to the wisdom and justice of Parliament against the cruelty of her husband. The unseemly quarrel was made the matter of repeated motions in the House of Commons by Whitbread and others; but, for a time, a series of great events happening on the Continent threw merely domestic affairs into the background. The destruction of Napoleon's grand army in Russia, the triumphant issue of the Vittoria campaign, the successive treaties between Great Britain and Sweden, Prussia, Russia, and, finally, of Austria, heralded the close of that titanic conflict which had taxed to the utmost the endurance of the nation during so many years. The griefs of an individual were eclipsed in the bright prospect of returning peace.

But when peace reigned once more, and London was filled with foreign monarchs and notables to congratulate each other and feast together, the shadow on the royal house was thrown into darker relief than ever. The Prince Regent, having informed Queen Charlotte of his "fixed and unalterable determination not to meet the Princess of Wales upon any occasion, either public or private," her Majesty had no alternative but to inform the Princess, when she intimated her intention of attending a drawing-room to be held in honour of the foreign royalties, that she could not be received. Then Brougham and Whitbread drew up another letter to the Speaker for

[1] *Creevey Papers*, i. 178.

the Princess's signature; but the unhappy woman was becoming weary of the miserable wrangle, and expressed her intention of going abroad. As may easily be conceived, Ministers opposed no obstacle to a course that would remove out of sight and, as would naturally follow, out of mind the principal figure in an affair which was becoming daily more formidable to the administration. On Lord Castlereagh's motion (July 4th), the House of Commons agreed to increase the Princess's allowance from £35,000 to £50,000 a year. This offer she accepted; but without consulting her advisers, who saw all their advantage thrown away. The public would certainly cease to interest themselves in a sufferer who had been so handsomely indemnified at their expense; the Regent and his Ministers would be set free from their dilemma.

A month later Whitbread incurred Brougham's anger by advising the Princess to decline the increased grant, but encouraged her in the design of living on the Continent.[1]

Princess Charlotte of Wales, 1796–1817.

Before the Princess of Wales carried out her intention of going abroad, the town was startled by another phase of this scandal. Signs of the tendency in the offspring of first cousins to inherit a double share of any constitutional imperfection in the parents had become manifest in Charlotte Augusta, only child of the Prince and Princess of Wales. She was now eighteen years of age, and had already caused some concern to those in attendance upon her by her impulsive and unconventional behaviour. Although brought up in jealous seclusion — a merciful hindrance to the closer contemplation of her father's mode of life—she had formed a strong opinion upon the dispute between her parents. Moreover, being fully aware of her position and rights as next heir to the throne after her father, she had alarmed her governess and others by the determination she showed to assert these rights. On the very rare occasions when she had been allowed to appear in public, she had been received with

[1] *Creevey Papers*, i. 204.

Princess Charlotte of Wales.

From a water colour drawing by Richard Woodman

LONDON: EDWARD ARNOLD. 1909

a warmth of demonstration in ominous contrast with that to which the Prince Regent had become accustomed. It was natural that Princess Charlotte, finding no outlet towards her father for the impulse of affection, should espouse ardently the cause of her mother, and it is now known how much Brougham and Whitbread, acting from motives the reverse of identical, did to stimulate this feeling.

The Regent, on his part, felt his daughter's presence as a perpetual reproach. It reminded him of circumstances which he would fain have thrust from remembrance. Obvious and natural relief was to be sought in a husband for the Princess. The choice of the Regent fell upon the Prince of Orange, heir-apparent to the lately restored throne of Holland. Apparently here was an ideal husband for an English Princess, for the Prince was of English education, of high character and ability, and held a commission in the British army. At first Princess Charlotte seems to have been well inclined to the project of marriage. It would, at least, deliver her from humiliating restraint and dreary domestic wrangles. The King of Holland referred to the prospective union in addressing his States; people in England were ready to receive with favour a formal announcement on the subject in Parliament; but fate ruled that such an announcement should never be made.

Her engagement to the Prince of Orange, 1814.

No humane heart, one would say, but would have sanctioned gratefully the provision of an honourable home for this ill-starred Princess. Incredible as it may seem, there were public men in England who scrupled not to fling Princess Charlotte's chance of happiness into the furnace of party. In June it became known that the marriage negotiations were broken off. On the 26th of that month Castlereagh wrote to Lord Clancarty: "The circumstances attending the rupture of the marriage are still mysterious."[1] They have remained so until quite lately. The Duke of Buckingham perceived in them a Russian intrigue to frustrate the union of the heir-

The engagement is broken off, June 1814.

[1] *Castlereagh Correspondence*, x. 61.

apparent of the Netherlands with the heir-presumptive of the British Empire, and declared that the Grand-Duchess of Oldenberg, sister of the Emperor Alexander, was the direct agent in persuading Princess Charlotte to the course she took.[1] Nothing is more probable than the existence of such an intrigue. Alexander of Russia took a keen interest in the affairs of Holland at this time, being known to have designed the annexation of East Friedland to his brother-in-law's duchy of Oldenberg.[2] Moreover, the Grand-Duchess of Oldenberg was in London during the spring and summer of 1814, and established herself on intimate terms with the Princess Charlotte. Let the Russian agency be admitted;[3] it might have been of small avail, had not the Emperor found eager allies among King George's subjects. Damning evidence of this has lately come to light.

On 20th June, when news of the rupture of marriage negotiations had got abroad, Sir Matthew White Ridley was put up by the Opposition to move a resolution in the House of Commons. The scene—the motives of the actors—their reckless indifference to the welfare and happiness of the young Princess whose cause they professed to champion—all have been set forth with cynical precision by one behind the scenes. Here is the account of the debate rendered by Mr. Creevey to his wife:—

"Well, I hope you admired our little brush last night in the presence of all the foreign grandees except the Emperor. It was really very capitally got up, and you never saw poor devils look so distressed as those on the Treasury Bench. It was a scene well calculated to make the foreign potentates stare as they did, and the little Princes of Prussia laugh as they did. . . . We have now, however, a new game for Master Prinny,[4] which must begin to-morrow. Whitbread has formal authority from young Prinny[5] to state that the marriage is broken off, and that the reasons are—first, her attachment to this country, which she cannot and will not leave; and above all, her attachment to her mother,

[1] *Memoirs of the Regency*, ii. 86–88.

[2] *Castlereagh Correspondence*, x. 97.

[3] In the following year the Prince of Orange married the Grand-Duchess Anne, sister of the Emperor of Russia.

[4] The Prince Regent.

[5] Princess Charlotte of Wales.

whom, in her present distressed situation, she likewise cannot leave. This is, in short, her letter to the Prince of Orange in taking leave of him, and a copy of this letter is in Whitbread's possession.

"Since writing the last sentence, Whitbread has shown me Princess Charlotte's letter to the Prince of Orange. By God! it is capital. And now what do you suppose has produced this sudden attachment to her mother? It arises from the profound resources of old Brougham, and is, in truth, one of the most brilliant movements in his campaign. He tells me that he has had direct intercourse with the young one; that he has impressed upon her the fact that if her mother goes away from England, as she is always threatening to do from her ill usage in this country, that then a divorce will inevitably take place, a second marriage follow, and thus the young Princess's title to the throne be gone. This has had an effect upon the young one almost magical."[1]

The Regent could not force on the marriage, but at least he could effectually separate his daughter from her mother. Princess Charlotte maintained her own establishment at Warwick House. Thither went his Royal Highness on 12th July, taking with him the Bishop of Salisbury. He informed the Princess that she must consider her attendants and servants dismissed, and bade her prepare to accompany him to Carlton House. The Princess withdrew from the room, dashed down the back stairs out into the street, where she hailed a hackney cab, and drove straight off to her mother's house in Connaught Place. Vain shelter! The Princess of Wales was intent upon leaving the country; she gave her daughter but a halting welcome, fearing how her action might be viewed by the Ministers with whom she was in negotiation. Soon drove up the Duke of York and Lord Chancellor Eldon. "When we arrived," wrote Eldon to his wife, "I informed her [Princess Charlotte] that a carriage was at the door, and we would attend her home. But home she would not go. She kicked and bounced, but would not go. Well, to do my office as gently as I could, I told her I was sorry for it; for, until she did go, she would be obliged to entertain us, as we would not leave her. At last she accompanied us."[2] After this episode Princess Charlotte was removed by the Regent to Cranbourn

Flight of Princess Charlotte, 12th July 1814.

[1] *Creevey Papers*, i. 197.

[2] Twiss, i. 523.

Lodge in Windsor Forest, where she lived in seclusion with a new set of attendants.

The Princess of Wales left England on 8th August 1814 on board the *Jason* frigate, accompanied by two devoted ladies, Lady Charlotte Lindsay[1] and Lady Elizabeth Forbes, and three or four gentlemen in attendance. Before a year was out they had all quitted her suite, and thenceforward her Royal Highness was without the companionship of any lady. She wandered from place to place, more reckless than ever of her name and fame.

Needless to dwell upon details, which subsequently were sifted before the highest tribunal in the realm. Students of human folly or foibles may examine them at length in the official record of the trial in 1820, or as abridged in the *Annual Register* for that year. Can there be wonder that rumours of the Princess's mode of life, reaching England, filled with anxiety the minds of responsible men? The old King, insane, stone-blind, with flowing white hair and beard, was alive and no more. Let his flame flicker out, as soon it must, and this woman, the common talk of Mediterranean fishermen, would be Queen of England. The British monarchy had weathered the storms which had sapped so many thrones, but how should it withstand this inward canker?

As for the Prince Regent, he prepared to seize the opportunity, long intended, of divorcing his wife. He caused information to be collected from sources public and private, tending to incriminate the Princess, and demanded that his Ministers should institute proceedings. But however well fitted the Regent may have been for the rôle of Henry VIII., the nineteenth century was not on all-fours with the sixteenth. Royal prerogative could give him no advantage in such a case over that inherent in every private citizen. The Prince had deserted his wife, refusing to meet her "upon any occasion public or private," and his subsequent life had been notoriously immoral. His Ministers refused to take action, so he turned elsewhere for counsel. The Vice-Chancellor, Sir John Leach, having been for ten years

[1] A daughter of the 5th Duke of Argyll, she was better known after her second marriage as Lady Charlotte Bury.

a member of the Whig Opposition in Parliament, had retained the Regent's confidence after he had dismissed the Whigs from favour, and now was invited to give an opinion upon the evidence collected for his Royal Highness. He reported that the papers "contained matter of grave and serious charge," and recommended that searching inquiry should be made in places where the Princess had stayed or travelled since she left England. The result was the appointment of what became known as the "Milan Commission," consisting of Mr. Cooke, a member of the Chancery Bar, and a solicitor named Powell, who were sent out to Italy in September 1818, at the public expense, to collect evidence, take depositions, and report to the Cabinet.

The "Milan Commission," Sept. 1818–July 1819.

Meanwhile the curtain had fallen upon the brief drama of Princess Charlotte's existence. A husband had been found for her in the person of Prince Leopold,[1] third son of the reigning Duke of Saxe-Coburg-Saalfield; the marriage took place at Carlton House on 2nd May 1816.

Time had been when nothing seemed less imminent than the extinction of the line of Hanover; but of all the nine sons and six daughters of George III. Princess Charlotte was at this time the sole legitimate offspring. The royal succession, therefore, had become a matter of grave anxiety, not only to English statesmen, but to every subject of King George who gave more than passing thought to the future of the empire; people of every rank and degree were frankly delighted when it became known that the young Princess was soon to become a mother. The troubled past was hurried out of sight; the exiled Princess was dismissed from memory, even the Regent himself enjoyed a fleeting gleam of popularity.

Very brief was the respite. On 6th November 1817 Princess Charlotte expired, after giving birth to a dead male child. In all history there is no more forlorn figure than this heir of England. Peace, when it came to her, was so unfamiliar that she distrusted its reality. "Certainly," she

Death of Princess Charlotte, 6th Nov. 1817.

[1] Elected King of the Belgians, 4th June 1831.

said to Wilberforce a few days before her death—"certainly I am the happiest woman in the world. I have not a wish ungratified—surely this is too much to last."[1]

Great was the stir among the royal Dukes at this failure of the succession. The Duke of York was married, but childless; so was the Duke of Cumberland, and those who loved their country best prayed most earnestly that he might so remain, so darkly tarnished was his name. The Duke of Sussex, at the age of twenty, had married Lady Augusta Murray, daughter of the 4th Earl of Dunmore, but their union had been declared void under the Royal Marriage Act. Howbeit, the Dukes of Clarence, Kent, and Cambridge were still bachelors, and displayed dutiful diligence in dismissing their respective mistresses as a preliminary to the holy state of matrimony.[2] As for the Prince Regent, his desire for a divorce from Caroline was quickened, if possible. Freedom to marry again was now no mere matter of personal inclination; it was a political obligation.

Brougham despaired of making further political capital out of one so hopelessly indifferent to public opinion as the Princess of Wales. Whitbread, afflicted with sudden brain disease, had perished by his own hand in 1815. The report of the Milan Commission was delivered in 1819. Probably Brougham had received some private inkling of its tenor which convinced him that the Princess would not serve his purpose further, because in June he conveyed a proposal through Lord Hutchinson to Lord Liverpool, without the Princess's knowledge or authority, that her allowance of £35,000 a year should be secured to her for life, instead of terminating with the demise of the Crown, on condition that she should remain abroad and never assume the rank and title of Queen, but be known as Duchess of Cornwall. No honest counsel would have given away in such a manner the whole case against a client in whose innocence he had the slightest faith.

Report of the Milan Commission, July 1819.

[1] Wilberforce's *Life*, iv. 362.

[2] See a curious conversation between the Duke of Kent and Thomas Creevey (*Creevey Papers*, i. 268–271).

Brougham's proposal was submitted to the Regent, who would none of it. A formal separation from his wife would not set him free to marry again; he must have a divorce. When it was explained to him that a divorce could not be obtained by consent, but only upon proof of the Princess's infidelity, the Regent declared that the report of the Milan Commission contained "the clearest and most decisive proof of guilt." To this the Cabinet replied, warning his Royal Highness against relying upon evidence obtained in a manner which was unavoidable, many of the witnesses being foreigners "of a low station in life," dissuading him strongly from founding any legal proceedings upon such evidence, and urging him to abstain from taking any further step.[1]

Next came a letter from the Princess of Wales herself to Lord Liverpool, announcing her intention of returning to England to prosecute a suit which she had filed in Chancery against the executors of her brother, the Duke of Brunswick.[2] She wrote to Brougham also, who, perceiving no advantage to be got from her presence in England, made an appointment to meet her in September at Lyons, *and failed to keep it.* The Princess, after waiting for Brougham several weeks, returned disconsolately to Italy.

In January the old King died, and matters could no longer be smoothed over. Ministers were face to face with a dilemma from which the wisest of them could devise no escape. Among the earliest duties of the Privy Council at the outset of a new reign is to direct the necessary changes in the Liturgy. Hitherto the Almighty had been officially entreated "to bless and preserve our gracious Queen Charlotte, their Royal Highnesses George, Prince of Wales, the Princess of Wales, and all the Royal Family." Nothing would induce George IV. to permit his wife to be prayed for as Queen. In vain it was urged that Queen of England she was, whether she should be prayed for under that title or not.

The question of the Liturgy, 1820.

[1] Lord Liverpool's *Life*, iii. 21.

[2] He fell at Quatre Bras, as his father had fallen at Jena, at the head of the Black Brunswickers.

The King, as head of the Church of England, declined to sanction the admission of her name. The Cabinet was divided on the question. Croker, who was not in the Cabinet, takes credit to himself for having brought them to one mind. "If she is fit to be introduced to the Almighty, she is fit to be received by men, and if we are to *pray* for her in church, we may surely *bow* to her at Court."[1] He was so proud of this "unanswerable argument" that he hurried off to Carlton House and conveyed it to the King through his Majesty's private secretary Blomfield. Next day, 12th February, the Cabinet yielded. The Queen's name was struck out of the prayer which appeared in the *Gazette* the same night.

It was a false step, and brought about trouble which might never have occurred. As Peel afterwards remarked in writing to Croker: "They applied a blow-pipe when they omitted the Queen's name in the Liturgy: when they established a precedent of dethronement for imputed personal misconduct. . . . I certainly would have tried her the moment she set foot in England, but I would have prayed for her as Queen till she had been tried."[2] Apparently it was the sting of this affront that decided the Queen to return to England. At all events, that was the burden of complaint in the letter she wrote to Lord Liverpool on 16th March. But there was another circumstance of indignity which may have had more immediate effect upon her movements. Being in Rome when she read of George III.'s death, she applied to the Papal Government for a guard of honour upon her palace, as Queen of England. Cardinal Gonsalvi replied that the presence in Rome of the Queen of England had not been officially notified to his Court, and that the guard could not be furnished.

King George continued to impetrate for a divorce, and finding his present Ministers unwilling to carry out his

[1] *Croker Papers*, i. 159.

[2] Ibid., 176. It so happened that prayer *was* offered for "our gracious Queen Caroline" in many parts of the country on Sunday, 14th February. Intimation of the change did not reach distant parishes in time to prevent the country clergy anticipating what would have been the usual alteration in the prayer

desires, cast about for others who would. The Marquess of Wellesley and Sir John Leach were both sounded as to their ability to form a government. Failing in both quarters (for what Minister could count upon the support of Parliament in proceedings which would turn the stomachs of all but the most obsequious courtiers?), his Majesty threatened to retire to his dominion of Hanover. Still, matters might have taken a comparatively tranquil, if ignoble, course, had Brougham played a straightforward hand. As adroit as he was able, and unscrupulous as he was adroit, he determined to wreck the Ministry and bring confusion upon the King. On 15th April, in his official capacity as the Queen's Attorney-General, he received from Lord Liverpool a formal proposal identical to that which he himself had made on her behalf, though without her authority, while she was Princess of Wales. Identical, save that it provided for a life annuity of £50,000 instead of £35,000.[1] Brougham allowed Lord Liverpool to understand that he would recommend her Majesty to accept these terms; *but he neither communicated the proposal to the Queen nor informed the Minister that he had neglected to do so.* The public, of course, knew nothing of this offer, and were left to form an opinion most unfavourable to the Government from a long statement of her grievances which the Queen had sent to all the London papers.

Bent upon working the utmost mischief, Brougham purposely concealed from the Queen the liberal provision offered to her, fearing that she would grasp at it and remain abroad. It was essential to his present purpose that she should come to England.[2] Not until she was far advanced on her journey thither did he comply with her command to meet her, which he did, accompanied by Lord Hutchinson, at Saint-Omer on 3rd June. Hutchinson was one of the few Whig friends whom George IV. had

[1] The document is printed in the *Annual Register* for 1820, p. 126.

[2] "If she is wise enough to accept the *pont d'or* which we have tendered her, the calamities and scandal of a public investigation will be avoided. If she is mad enough or so ill-advised as to put her foot upon English ground, I shall, from that moment, regard Pandora's box as opened." (Lord Castlereagh to Prince Metternich, 6th May 1820.)

kept in favour, and Brougham informed the Queen that he, Hutchinson, was charged to convey to her certain proposals on the part of the King's Ministers, which were presently submitted to her. They were the same which Brougham had suppressed for six momentous weeks, the same in substance which he himself had made on her behalf a year before; yet now, acting on his advice, she emphatically declined to entertain them. Lord Hutchinson warned the Queen that if she persisted in returning to England the Government would take penal proceedings against her, founded upon evidence taken by the Milan Commission. But Brougham was at her other ear. He had destroyed all hopes of preferment from the Tories by his insincerity to Lord Liverpool, which could no longer be concealed; he foresaw a rich harvest of fame and popularity to be reaped in a great State trial by the leading counsel for the oppressed Caroline. He found no difficulty in persuading her that it was too late to go back, and on 6th June she landed at Dover, where she received a royal salute from the King's garrison, the officer in command having received no orders to the contrary.

Queen Caroline returns to England, 6th June 1820.

One act of unusual prudence probably was owing to Brougham's advice. The Queen dismissed her chamberlain Bergami from her service before she left Saint-Omer. It was better not to present to a London mob this black-whiskered rascal about whom so much sinister scandal had gone abroad. His place was taken by Alderman Matthew Wood, M.P.,[1] who had travelled to France to meet her Majesty, her other companions being Lady Anne Hamilton and William Austin, the "little Williken" of former days.

The Queen's progress to London was practically a triumphal procession. Arriving in the metropolis on 7th

[1] Wood was one of those irrepressible busybodies whom no fear of ridicule or sense of impropriety deters from thrusting into the thick of any agitation. He had been twice Lord Mayor of London, and had pestered the assassin Thistlewood, even on the scaffold, with questions so framed as to elicit answers that would fit in with his own theory of the Cato Street conspiracy. "Wood, the ass and alderman, whom they call Thistle-Wood," was the description of him in a letter to Lord Hutchinson from Brougham, written when Brougham little foresaw how soon he should be closely associated with Wood.

June, she was received with acclamation, the populace being vehemently in her favour; many houses were illuminated—some out of goodwill, more from fear of the mob. "Daily, nightly, hourly Cabinets are in fashion," wrote Lord Chancellor Eldon to his daughter; and as the odium of the subsequent proceedings fell chiefly on this stalwart statesman, it is well to note how firmly he discouraged, in the same letter, the proposal for a divorce:—

"The King is determined, and will hear of nothing but thorough investigation, and of what he, and those who consider *themselves* more than him, think and talk of—thorough exposure and divorce. To this extent Parliament will not go; but, amidst the mess of difficulties, something must arise in a few days, or it will happen, I think, in a few days that the K. will try whether he cannot find an Administration which can bring Parliament more into his views than his present Ministers. I don't see how matters can go on a week longer with the present Administration remaining. I think no Administration who have any regard for him will go the length he wishes *as* an Administration; and if they will, they cannot take Parliament along with them. That body is afraid of disclosures, *not on one side only*, which may affect the monarchy itself."[1]

On 6th June a message was delivered in both Houses of Parliament, announcing that his Majesty "thinks it necessary, in consequence of the arrival of the Queen, to communicate to the House of Lords certain papers respecting the conduct of her Majesty since her departure from this kingdom, which he recommends to the immediate and serious attention of the House." On the following day Brougham delivered a communication from the Queen to the House of Commons, protesting against another secret inquiry and demanding an open investigation of her conduct. On 9th June Lord Liverpool reminded the Queen that she had returned no answer to the proposals contained in his memorandum of 15th April, and assured her "that the King's servants will still think it their duty, notwithstanding all that has passed, to receive for consideration any suggestion which her Majesty or her advisers may have to offer upon these propositions." Next day the Queen replied, through Brougham, that the memorandum of 15th April, "which the proposition made through Lord

[1] Twiss, ii. 9.

Hutchinson had appeared to supersede," had just been submitted to her *for the first time.* Can any one doubt that the Queen would have agreed to a formal separation on the terms offered? Brougham, at all events, knew her easy-going nature too well to doubt her readiness to take a course which would have put an end to all his fine-drawn schemes, and he caused her Majesty to stipulate for a condition which he considered it in the last degree improbable that Ministers could grant—namely, that "the recognition of her rank and privileges as Queen must be the basis of any arrangement which can be made." To his surprise, the reply was that the Queen was not asked to renounce any of her rights and privileges, which could only be abrogated by law, but that it was proposed that she should abstain from exercising some of them. Brougham could resist no longer, but he soon found opportunity of bringing the negotiations which followed to nothing.

The Whig Earls Fitzwilliam and Sefton were appointed to act for the Queen in conferring with the Tory Duke of Wellington and Lord Castlereagh on the part of the King. The party stamp thus set upon the negotiation was deepened when the Whig lords retired and were replaced by Brougham and Denman, the Queen's Attorney and Solicitor Generals. On the fifth day the proceedings were broken off upon the question of restoring the Queen's name to the Liturgy, which Brougham declared was indispensable, while the King continued inflexible in refusing.

No ingenuity could have devised anything better fitted to inflame the rough mob-chivalry out of doors. The streets rang with cheers for the Queen, and jeers for the Vice-Queen, as they called Lady Conyngham. Meetings were got up all over the country to protest against the persecution of Caroline. Wellington, once the popular idol, had the windows of his carriage broken;[1] the Guards, upon whom the safety of the metropolis depended (for there was as yet no police force[2]), showed

[1] *Croker Papers*, i. 174.

[2] The origin of the present admirable police force may be traced to a memorandum by the Duke of Wellington upon the critical state of affairs at this time (*Civil Despatches*, i. 128).

open sympathy with the Queen, one battalion breaking into open mutiny.

On 19th June Ministers announced in Parliament that they had failed to come to terms with the Queen, and that the negotiations had been broken off on that day. On the 22nd Wilberforce tried his hand as peacemaker, moving an address to the Queen to assure her that should she waive her objections to the proposals made to her and accept them, the action would be interpreted, not as a desire to evade inquiry into her conduct, but as a renewed proof of her desire to submit to the authority of Parliament and to spare the nation the distressing consequences of a formal trial. In the debate arising, Castlereagh, admitting that this was "the most embarrassing question which ever perplexed any government," accepted Wilberforce's motion, but referred to the alteration of the Liturgy as "a trifle light as air," forgetting the rest of the quotation, which describes such trifles as being "to the jealous, confirmations strong as proofs of holy writ." He said that if the Queen's name was not mentioned separately in the offices of the Church, she must be held to be included in the general prayer for the Royal Family; to which Denman, her Solicitor-General, made prompt and telling retort that "if her Majesty is included in any general prayer, it is in the prayer for all who are desolate and oppressed."[1]

The motion was carried by 391 to 134, and four members, loudly hooted by the mob, waited upon the Queen to present the address. Her answer was read to them by Brougham; it consisted of a firm refusal, "as an accused and injured Queen," to sacrifice any essential privilege or withdraw her appeal to justice. Ministers had now no alternative but to execute their Sovereign's will. On 5th July Lord Liverpool introduced in the Lords a bill "to deprive her Majesty Queen Caroline Amelia Elizabeth of the title, prerogative rights, privileges, and exemptions of Queen Consort of this realm, and to dissolve the

[1] Which brings to mind a similarly poignant argument by Bishop Osiander of Würtemberg, who, when the reigning Duke Eberhard Ludwig desired that the name of his mistress, Countess Grävenitz, should be inserted in the prayers of the Church, replied: "Is she not already prayed for? Do we not say 'Deliver us from evil'?" (Carlyle's *Frederick the Great*, ii. 233).

marriage between his Majesty and the said Caroline Amelia Elizabeth."

On August 17th, the day fixed for the introduction of the Bill of Pains and Penalties, the appearance of the streets leading to Westminster Palace might easily have daunted a more pusillanimous Cabinet; but the nerves of Liverpool and his colleagues had stood the strain of many a storm. Though all the approaches to Parliament were thronged by crowds cheering for the Queen and groaning for the King, Wellington, and Eldon; though the presence of Life Guards in Palace Yard, of the Coldstream Guards and artillery in Westminster Hall, foreshadowed events seldom to be dreaded in English streets, the Ministers who had not quailed in the face of armed Europe were not to be browbeaten by a mob of their own people. Happily the mob were in excellent humour, and the day passed to its close without bloodshed.

The Bill of Pains and Penalties, Aug. 1820.

The bill having been introduced in the House of Lords, the trial took the unfamiliar form of combined judicial and parliamentary procedure, evidence being taken and counsel heard for the prosecution and defence, the verdict to be conveyed in the division on the second reading. If anything was wanting to deepen the gravity of the issue, it was supplied by the penalty incurred upon conviction, for adultery by the royal consort is punishable by death.

Trial of Queen Caroline, 17th Aug.–3rd Nov. 1820.

The trial dragged along, with a short interval of adjournment, until 2nd November, when Lord Chancellor Eldon moved the second reading. Neither the humiliating facts brought out in evidence, nor the convincing proofs that, even if technically innocent, Queen Caroline had been shamefully indifferent about her good fame and the dignity of her position, impaired her popularity with the masses. The mob in the streets used to cheer for Mr. Austin, "the Queen's son." They only knew and cared that if she were guilty her husband was fifty times worse; moreover, she was the weaker party in the strife, fighting single-handed against King and Government. Meetings continued to be held both in London and the country; addresses

of encouragement to the Queen poured in from the provincial centres; were *vox populi* infallibly *vox Dei*, it was never more articulate in utterance.

The Bow Street officers begged Lord Eldon not to incur risk in approaching the House of Lords by his usual route through the Mall and the Horse Guards. They wanted him to use the Birdcage Walk, which was then a private passage. But English mobs are never bloodthirsty, perhaps because they never are so sorely tried as others. Their aspect may be fierce; they may even show little respect for property, but they seldom transgress constitutional precedent further than by wrecking a few railings and smashing obnoxious windows. Many angry voices were raised against Lord Eldon during these anxious months, but never a single hand or weapon. And if credit be due to the London populace for their self-restraint on this occasion, let Lord Eldon's noble words in moving the second reading of the Bill on 2nd November stand as a beacon to statesmen in all times of popular passion:—

"One more word, my lords, and I have done. As to what has passed, or is passing, out of doors, I will take no notice of it, for I am not supposed to hear it or to know anything about it; only this I will say, that, whatever has happened or will happen, I will perform my duty here. But in the course of this solemn inquiry, your lordships have heard from the bar of this House what I was very sorry to hear, and what I believe was never before addressed to a court of justice. Something like a threat was held out to your lordships that, if you passed justice against the Queen, you would never have the power of passing another judgment.[1] My lords, you stand here as the great and acknowledged protectors of the liberties, the character, the honour, and the lives of your fellow-subjects, and you cannot discharge that high trust a moment longer than while you can say to yourselves—and, for myself, if I had not a moment longer to live, I would say to you, 'Be just and fear not!' My lords, I know the people of this country. I am sure that if your lordships do your duty to them, by preserving their liberties and the Constitution which has been handed down to you from your ancestors, the time is not far distant when they will do their duty to you; when they will acknowledge that those who are invested with the great judicial functions of the State ought firmly to meet all the reproaches to which faithful perform-

[1] In opening the defence, Brougham had warned the peers of the possible consequences to themselves if their verdict went against the Queen.

ance of those functions may expose them; to court no popularity; to do their duty, and to leave the consequences to the wisdom and the justice of God, who guides the feelings and actions of men, and directs the course and consequences of all human affairs."

These sentences enfold a doctrine vital to all public integrity. If it was important to enunciate it fearlessly at a time when the masses could exert but remote and indirect influence upon the acts of their rulers, how much more closely does it concern national security that it should remain a cardinal rule of conduct in an age when rulers are placed in power, or thrust from it, by the voice of the multitude. Be the demerits of an aristocratic and unreformed Parliament what they may, the temptation to truckle for popularity is increased a hundred-fold under a democratic system of government.

The concluding days of the trial were taken up with an elaborate display of forensic rhetoric on both sides. If the cause itself were ignoble, it was nobly served by counsel. Had it been possible to obtain an independent and impartial opinion from the tribunal, without doubt it must have declared the Queen guilty by an overwhelming majority. It is certain that many peers either abstained from voting, or voted against the Bill, from unwillingness to give a victory to such a husband over such a wife; others, from the less creditable motive of dread of popular violence; others, again, voted against it in obedience to party discipline. The small majority of 28 votes—123 to 95—by which the second reading was carried, was secured only on the understanding that the divorce clause would be abandoned. Even this meagre majority fell to nine on the third reading—108 to 99—which decided the fate of the Bill. Lord Liverpool immediately rose and moved that it "be read this day six months," and Parliament was prorogued on 23rd November.

The Bill abandoned, 10th Nov. 1820.

The King, so far from feeling gratitude to his Ministers for having undertaken a detestable task in compliance with his wishes, was furious with them for abandoning the Bill. He vowed he would get other servants; but in the end he had to keep on Lord Liverpool, though he never

forgave him for failing to carry the Bill of Pains and Penalties.

When Parliament reassembled in January, the treasury bench had lost its only eloquent occupant. Canning had disapproved all along of the proceedings against the Queen, but had agreed not to desert his colleagues till the affair was settled one way or another. He now resigned, earning thereby a chief place in his Sovereign's black list.

Canning's resignation, 1821.

Had Queen Caroline been steadfast in her declaration that nothing should induce her to accept any grant from Parliament so long as her name was excluded from the Liturgy, there is no saying to what extent the popular ferment in her favour might not have risen; but, to the dismay of all her friends, she now wrote to Lord Liverpool asking that provision might be made for her. When this became publicly known, and Parliament had responded by granting her an annuity of £50,000, the ardour of her partisans very quickly cooled down. The working classes and the poor naturally ceased to take a burning interest in the affairs of a lady so richly endowed. The London mob and middle classes prepared to enjoy themselves to the top of their bent at the coming coronation, which the Queen's arrival in England, and its consequences, had caused to be postponed from the previous August until the summer of 1821. Then, indeed, as explained in the opening of this chapter, there was some revival in Caroline's favour, but the demonstration in the streets was so ambiguous that both the King's and the Queen's party were able to draw encouragement therefrom. Brougham had a scheme for rousing the north in the Queen's favour, but the proposed tour in Scotland never took place. Ten days after the coronation, Caroline was seized with internal inflammation while in her box at Drury Lane Theatre, and on 7th August this random, restless life ebbed away—a merciful release—merciful to herself, whose folly had multiplied her misfortunes; merciful to Ministers, whom her demise relieved from embarrassment almost unparalleled in a constitutional government; merciful to the nation, to

Death of Queen Caroline, 7th Aug. 1821.

which her existence, if prolonged, must have proved an increasing source of disquiet and reproach.

The spirit of this unhappy woman was at rest, yet even her poor remains could not be conveyed to the tomb without tumult and violence. In accordance with her expressed wish, she was to be buried in Brunswick, and the Government made arrangement for cavalry reliefs to escort the body from Hammersmith to Harwich, where it was to be conveyed on board one of the King's ships. A great demonstration was organised for the occasion, and vigorous protests were made against the presence of troops. Her Majesty's remains, urged Lady Hood, should be entrusted to the safe keeping of the people, "her only friends in her lifetime." It was clearly impossible to consent to such a hazardous proceeding. With the best-intentioned crowd disorder is liable to ensue, in which case the Government must have been held responsible; and the spirit shown by the Queen's executors proved that there was good ground for proper precautions being taken. When the Lord Chamberlain's officers and the undertakers were directing the removal of the body from Brandenburgh House, Dr. Lushington and Mr. Wilde, as the Queen's executors, interfered to prohibit them, and an unseemly altercation took place. At last the procession set forth. Nothing had been abated from the state befitting the obsequies of the Queen of England. Clarencieux King-of-Arms carried the imperial crown and cushion in the Queen's state coach drawn by six horses; the hearse was drawn by eight horses; eight deputy marshals, eight-and-thirty pages, deputations from Hammersmith and London, fourteen mourning coaches, and a squadron of the Blues made a pageant sufficiently imposing on that dismal morning of wind and rain. But where was the King? where the Royal Dukes? where the Ministers? were questions angrily asked by the crowd collected on the route, despite the evil weather. From words the mob passed to violence. At Cumberland Gate, the escort was stoned, and no progress was possible till the soldiers fired on the people, killing two men. Sir Robert Wilson, a general in the army, who had served with

Disturbance at the Queen's funeral, 15th Aug. 1821.

singular distinction in many lands, was carried away by enthusiasm for the dead Queen, forgot his duty as a soldier, and called on the troops not to obey the command to fire.[1]

Another barricade was encountered at Tottenham Court Road, and the route had to be taken past Drury Lane and through the City, the Lord Mayor securing a quiet passage by riding at the head of the procession. The last conflict over the poor remains took place at Colchester.

In accord with directions given in a codicil to the Queen's will, her executors, on the night before the embarkation, fixed upon the coffin a plate inscribed, "Here lies Caroline of Brunswick, the injured Queen of England." This was removed in the morning by order of the officials in charge, in spite of the protests of Lushington and Wilde.

Meanwhile King George had started on his progress to Ireland—progress which it taxed all the ingenuity of the household officials, all the embellishing craft of the Court journalist, to invest with decency, not to speak of dignity. News of the Queen's serious illness overtook him at Holyhead. Lord Sidmouth persuaded his Majesty to tarry there for further news, lest his public entry into Dublin should coincide exactly with intelligence of his wife's death. Directly that event was announced, the King sailed for Dublin, landed at Howth on his birthday, 12th August, "gayer than it might be proper to tell," as the discreet Croker describes his condition.[2] Less indulgent observers were more uncharitable.[3] "Go," was the kingly counsel

[1] He was dismissed from the army for his part in this day's proceedings. A Liberal historian has described this as a vindictive act on the part of "the King's friends," and denounced "the folly of Ministers" in assenting to his dismissal (Walpole's *England*, i. 621, 623). What would good Liberals say if insubordination were to be treated as a crime in a private soldier and condoned in a general officer? Wilson was guilty of resisting the troops in the execution of their duty. It may be said that he ought not to have been punished without trial by court-martial. The reasons against taking that course are fully set forth in the Duke of Wellington's letter to Lord Liverpool (*Civil Despatches*, i. 180). Instances have been frequent in recent times of the services of an officer being "dispensed with" without trial. However, Wilson's case was made into a party question, and he was restored with the rank of Lieut.-General when the Whigs came into office in 1830.

[2] *Croker Papers*, i. 201.

[3] "In the last stage of intoxication." (Fremantle to Buckingham. *Memoirs of George IV.*, i. 194.)

delivered to the crowd in Phœnix Park, "go and do by me as I shall do by you—drink my health in a bumper. I shall drink all yours in a bumper of good Irish whisky." At his private levee his Majesty had the grace to wear mourning, and crape round his arm during the three weeks he remained in Ireland; but, says gossip Croker, "it was not easy to persuade him to this."

Happily for King George, his Irish subjects were too warm-hearted to prove stern critics of conduct.

CHAPTER XI

Canning's resignation—Severe depression of agriculture—The King declines to take Canning back—Coalition with the Grenvilles—Weakness of Ministers—Death of Castlereagh—Canning becomes Foreign Secretary—The Spanish revolution—Congress of Troppau and Laybach—Manifesto of the Holy Alliance—The Greek War of Independence—The Congress of Vienna and Verona—The affairs of Spain.

In June 1820, when proceedings against Queen Caroline were pending, Canning sought an interview with the King, and explained that, having been formerly on intimate terms of friendship with her Majesty and consulted by her about her own affairs, he felt it impossible to take any part against her. Feeling that the King had a right to the whole service of his Secretaries of State, he desired to be informed whether it would be more agreeable to his Majesty that he should continue in office, "altogether silent and inactive on this particular question," or that he should make way for another who would not be restrained by the same scruples. Canning added that, while leaving the decision to the King, he considered that the best course would be that he should retire. The King received this communication with perfect good-humour; but he was not deficient in shrewdness. He told Canning plainly that he did not believe he had given "all his reasons for declining to take a share in the hostile proceedings" against the Queen, and that he would take some hours to think the matter over.

Canning's resignation, Dec. 1820.

The King had not mistaken his man. Although there is no cause to suspect the sincerity of Canning's personal reasons for objecting to the Bill of Pains and Penalties, beyond and behind them lay his dread of sharing the unpopularity which he knew would be incurred by its authors, and which he believed would be fatal to the Liverpool administration.[1]

On the day following the interview, the King sent

[1] See Lyttelton's letter to Sir C. Bagot (*Canning and his Friends*, ii. 100), and Canning's to Bagot (ibid., p. 101).

through Lord Liverpool an express injunction that Canning was to retain his office, with perfect liberty of action in respect to the proceedings against the Queen.[1] Canning accordingly remained President of the India Board; but before the trial began he went to the Continent, ready, as he wrote to Liverpool, "to share the *fate*, if not the labours, of the Administration."[2] The proceedings against the Queen having broken down, discussion in the House of Commons upon her position and the conduct of the Government became inevitable, which would place Canning in an impossible situation. As a Minister he must be present, yet unable either to support or censure, by voice or vote, acts of which he had proclaimed his disapproval. On 12th December, therefore, he tendered his resignation, which was accepted. Perfectly consistent in appearance; but nobody much believed that all Canning's cards were on the table. It seemed very unlikely that the Government could weather the storm that was gathering. "A Government," wrote Croker, "cannot go on without the gift of the gab. . . . If we had but a spokesman or two, we should shuffle through the session." If the ship went on the rocks, what saviour more likely to be sent for than Canning? That, at all events, was the construction many persons put upon his action at the time, and time has done little to alter the impression.

Severe depression of agriculture, 1820–21.

In effect, the session was shuffled through without catastrophe; albeit the Government was badly wounded in the house of its friends, suffering repeated defeats on motions by the county members, urgent for measures in favour of agriculture, which had no share in the general revival of trade. On the contrary, the fall in the price of breadstuffs, which had eased the strain upon townsfolk and artisans, had brought about a severe crisis in the principal industry of the country. The Act of 1815, providing for the exclusion of foreign corn whenever wheat fell below 80s. a quarter, and intended to secure remunerative prices to the cultivator and satisfactory rents to the landowner, had turned out a delusion. The production of food within

[1] *George Canning and his Times*, p. 290. [2] Ibid., p. 295.

the United Kingdom had overtaken the consumption;[1] no foreign corn was admitted between February 1819 and midsummer 1822, yet the price of wheat had continued to fall, the average of 1821 being 54s. 6d., bringing about a corresponding fall in the value of arable land. Nothing objectionable there, says the pure economist. In proportion as commodities are cheapened, the purchasing power of gold increases, to the advantage of wage-earners and capitalists alike. Yes, but no country can be governed upon—no government can afford to be guided by—purely economic principles. Human and social elements have to be accounted with. When the margin of profit vanishes from agriculture, it is cold comfort to assure landlords and farmers that gold is more valuable than it was. Land, theoretically, is but a commodity; but no business is affected by so many subsidiary considerations as that of landowning. Feudalism ceased long ago as a political and social system; yet it is on the best managed estates that its spirit still lingers in the consideration of the landlord for his tenants and the corresponding deference of tenants to their landlords. These mutual relations—indefinable—honourable—find no parallel in the dealings of a manufacturer or tradesman with his customers. Instances might be cited of tenants cultivating at this day farms which their forefathers have held from the same family for upwards of three centuries. If this be the case at the present time, much more was it so in the reign of George IV. It gave a solidarity to the agricultural

[1] A condition of affairs difficult for the twentieth-century reader to realise. The value of articles of food, capable of being produced in the United Kingdom, imported between 1st September 1902 and 31st August 1903 was as follows:—

Grain, flour, and meal	£60,029,864
Dead meat	38,125,071
Dairy produce	31,119,559
Poultry, eggs, rabbits, lard	12,462,571
Fruit and vegetables (capable of being grown in Great Britain)	7,060,269
Total	£148,797,344

Note that the total *value* of food imports in 1903 represents fully twice the *quantity* which could have been obtained for the same payment at the prices of 1819–22.

interest in Parliament as effective as the power obtained by the mercantile class under the first Reform Act, or that which the labour party is in process of developing under the existing franchise. The fate of every Government in the unreformed Parliament rested with the county members and those numerous borough representatives who were nominees of great landowners.

Unluckily, there is no more improvident class under heaven than landowners. Broad acres—the most conspicuous form of capital—impress the imagination as a perennial source of affluence. A landowner who lives within his nett income ranks among the rarest phenomena; even if he does not exceed it, he will not scruple to charge his estate with dowries, marriage portions, and provision for younger children.[1] Strength of mind and clearness of insight must be his in no common measure who, succeeding to an ancient estate, will cut down his expenses to prudent proportions, without regard to "what is expected" of one in his position. In 1821 a generation of landlords had grown up with no other experience save that, come what might, agriculture was impregnable. In this faith they had pulled down their barns and built greater; had they not "much goods laid up for many years"? especially sound port! Think of it! How many young men, succeeding to property, had the fortitude to break with the obligation to provide their friends with as much strong drink as they could walk—or be carried—to bed with; drinking measure for measure, too, for the cause of good company. Then these barns had been built and land reclaimed in great measure with borrowed money —money often borrowed in depreciated paper, to be repaid at the rate of 20s. for every 15s. received.

Spendthrifts, one will say, and sots; deserving the ill times that had come upon them; yet judged these English squires are to be, as all men have claim to be, not by the world as we know it, but by the world as it stood to them. Posterity will have their fling at ourselves, depend

[1] I am generalising, of course. Instances there are of landowners laying up provision of this sort out of income; but it will be admitted that what is the rule among men trained to business is the exception among squires.

upon it, even though Marquis Steynes and Jos Sedleys are not so conspicuous as once they were.

In their distress, then, the landowners demanded a remedy from the Government. Laws had been framed to render agriculture secure—had failed in their purpose—must be amended. Most of the landed interest in the House of Commons were Tories, but their ablest spokesman was Charles Callis Western, Whig member for Essex.[1] The Government yielded so far as to grant a Committee of Inquiry into the cause and extent of agricultural depression, but they were careful to appoint upon it men who would not recommend impracticable remedies. Sorry, reported the Committee in effect, there is no doubt about the depression; pretty deep, this time; arises partly from "abundance of our own growth," an inconvenience "which no legislative provision can alleviate," partly from increased value of our money, which punishes other classes of debtors than farmers.

Nothing to be made out of a report like that; so Western attacked the extra duty on malt which had been levied since 1819, and yielded a handsome million a year.

"Squire" Western actually beat the Government by twenty-four votes upon the introduction of his bill, which put Ministers on their mettle; the party was whipped up, and Western was left in a minority of ninety-eight. He fared better in moving to repeal the tax on agricultural horses; Ministers were beaten and the tax was lost. Evidently the Government could not live without the agricultural vote; so in 1822 a proposal to reappoint the Committee of Inquiry came from the Treasury Bench. In consequence of their report a sliding scale was adopted, whereby the duty on wheat imports should be 12s. a quarter when the price was 70s., falling to 5s. when the price was 80s. and to 1s. when it was 85s. Considering that not a bushel of foreign wheat was allowed into the country at the time, and that the home produce was selling at 46s. 2d. at the end of 1821, the boon was a hypothetical one; but the agricultural members accepted it in the prospect of ulterior contingencies.

[1] Created Baron Western of Rivenhall in 1833.

All this time Liverpool had been labouring hard to reinforce his front bench. Immediately after Canning's retirement he had offered the India Board to Peel, and he repeated the invitation in June 1821; but Peel had no fancy to forego the enjoyment of his "great fortune and domestic habits" in exchange for a laborious post of secondary importance.[1] The death of the Queen in August seemed to clear the way for Canning's return, but the King flatly refused even to hear of it—not only, at that time, out of resentment against Canning himself; he had some personal liking for him; but, as he told more than one of his Ministers, because he knew how dire was Liverpool's need of Canning's talents.[2] For Liverpool himself was in deep disgrace with his Majesty—first, for not having persevered with the divorce case; second, and chiefly, because he had refused to gratify the King's reigning mistress, Lady Conyngham, by making Charles Sumner a canon of Windsor.[3] Liverpool was for resigning, and told Wellington so. The Duke gave him excellent advice. Don't make Canning a cause of quarrel: "Canning is not very popular with the party. If the King persists in making Lord Conyngham Lord Chamberlain, *that* will be a just ground of quarrel; but would it not be better to avoid a quarrel at present?"

The King declines to take Canning back, 1821.

The letter concludes with a paragraph so characteristic of the Duke's strength, as well as of his weakness—of his inflexible loyalty to the Crown, though it should "hang upon a bush," as well as of his invincible dread of the increase of popular political power—that it may serve instead of whole pages of explanation:—

"It must not be forgotten that we have a duty imposed upon us which was never thrown on any of our predecessors. The question for us is not—whether we shall bear with many inconveniences and evils resulting from the King's habits and character, which none of our predecessors ever bore, or make way for others

[1] *Croker Papers*, i. 184, 187.

[2] Wellington's *Civil Despatches*, i. 195.

[3] Sumner had been tutor to Lady Conyngham's sons. He became Bishop of Llandaff in 1826 and of Winchester in 1827, and proved himself worthy of the preferment. He died in 1874.

equally capable with ourselves of carrying on the public service; but—whether we shall bear all that we have to endure, or give up the government to the Whigs and Radicals, or, in other words, the country in all its relations to irretrievable ruin."[1]

This was good stiffening doctrine, and encouraged Liverpool to persevere. He managed to effect an alliance with the Grenvillites, thereby gaining perhaps a dozen votes in the House of Commons, but, by the same token, strengthening the Opposition, inasmuch as it purged their ranks of some who had been comrades in little more than name. Lord Grenville, since taking a forward part in support of the "Six Acts," had buried himself among the lawns and woodlands of his beloved Dropmore; henceforward, till his death in 1834, to count as little or nothing in the course of public events; while Grey, his ancient ally, identified himself more closely than ever with the party of reform. The lead of Grenville's particular group descended to his nephew, Lord Buckingham, a nobleman with preposterous notions of his own talents and importance, who ended in becoming such an ultra-Tory as Wellington himself could not satisfy. Recruit more promising than Buckingham was Robert Peel, who took the Home Office in succession to our old friend "the Doctor," Lord Sidmouth.

Coalition with the Grenvilles, 1821.

Thus reinforced, Ministers met Parliament with a fair seeming of strength; but the appetite for retrenchment outran their inclination or their means to satisfy it. Twice they suffered defeat in the House of Commons—once in maintaining the necessity for a brace of Junior Lords of the Admiralty, when they found themselves in a minority of 128 to 182; again in defending the simultaneous existence of two Postmasters-General, when they were beaten by fifteen votes. Still they held on, the only possible Government; for Grey, weakened by defection of his Grenville, had no force behind him to attempt an administration.

Weakness of Ministers, 1822.

It was well for Ministers that the session had been wound up in the first week in August, a week before they

[1] Wellington's *Civil Despatches*, i. 195.

lost their pillar. Castlereagh had succeeded his father in 1821 as second Marquess of Londonderry; but as an Irish peer[1] he was not required to vacate his seat as a commoner. He had continued, therefore, to lead the House of Commons, and for some time past had been showing symptoms of strain. At his age—just turned fifty-three—timely rest might have restored the mischief, had there been no private trouble undermining his peace. But trouble there was, and of a cruelly corrosive kind. To some youthful irregularity Castlereagh had added the folly of attempting to purchase the silence of a couple of rascals who had laid the snare. Hush-money first, followed by blackmail at intervals ever shorter—by threats of exposure ever more brutal as the years wore on—sapped the courage of the victim, haunting him at all times that ought to have been leisure, until the unclean dread wrecked his intellect.

Death of Castlereagh, 12th Aug. 1822.

On 9th August Castlereagh—let us call him to the last by the name which he ennobled by his services—Castlereagh was at Cray, getting ready to join the Congress of Powers at Vienna, when he saw, or thought he saw, his persecutors crossing the gravel in front of his house. Wellington, visiting him that day, found him manifestly deranged. A doctor was sent for, who bled him, of course; there was hardly an ailment in those days of high living that was not expected to yield to bleeding. Weapons, razors and the like were put out of his reach; but Atropos kept a penknife hidden in a despatch-box, with which, early on 12th August, Castlereagh cut his throat.

To such sorrowful end was brought this noble life, which has been unhandsomely depreciated by certain writers blinking belated at his times through Liberal spectacles. "His foreign policy," says one, "was unfortunate; his

[1] It is one of the anomalies—eccentricities, maybe—of the British Constitution that, while the Peers of Ireland elect twenty-eight of their number to the House of Lords, any one of them not so elected is eligible as member for an English or Scottish constituency; whereas the Peers of Scotland only elect sixteen representatives to the House of Lords, and are debarred from election to the House of Commons and from voting in any parliamentary election.

domestic policy, which resembles it, was disastrous."[1] So surely will party prejudice warp the judgment passed by a just man upon the work of another. Castlereagh's foreign policy was that of Pitt, directed to set a curb upon the intolerable aggression of Napoleonic France, to support the established governments of Europe against the forces of revolution, and to extinguish the slave trade throughout the world. With cool courage and extraordinary diplomatic deftness he persevered until the more violent waves of the French cataclysm had subsided; the fruit of his conduct of the War Department and Foreign Affairs being forty years of peace.

To represent Castlereagh as a thick-and-thin champion of absolutism is in plain contradiction of the doctrines he enunciated and carried into practice from the close of the great war. Read, in confirmation of this, the last State paper ever penned by Castlereagh, instructions drawn up for his own guidance at the Congress of Vienna, and given to the Duke of Wellington for *his* guidance when he took his dead colleague's place as plenipotentiary. The tenor throughout, upon all the subjects to be dealt with, was non-interference, subject to treaty obligations, and "strict neutrality" in the Turko-Greek quarrel. Only upon the question of the slave trade was the British plenipotentiary directed to take a strong line.

His domestic policy, we are told, was disastrous; which resolves itself, upon examination, into the belief, concisely expressed in a deservedly popular encyclopædia, that he was "Queen Caroline's persecutor, and the author of the Peterloo massacre and the coercive 'Six Acts,' which will for ever stamp his name with infamy."[2] As to Queen Caroline, readers will have formed their own opinion as to who was her chief persecutor, if that is to be the term. The proceedings against her took place only in the House of Lords, and Castlereagh was in the House of Commons. With the precious "Peterloo massacre" he had no more to do than had any London constable; how should the Foreign Secretary be concerned in keeping the peace at Manchester? He was

[1] Sir S. Walpole's *England*, iii. 53.
[2] *Chambers's Encyclopædia.*

identified with the Six Acts (under two of which we live very comfortably at this hour) through the duty devolving upon him, as leader of the House of Commons, of conducting measures prepared by his colleague, the Home Secretary, in the other House. Castlereagh's loftier head has drawn upon itself the fire which should have been aimed at Sidmouth's.

Except the abolition of sinecures, which Castlereagh vigorously promoted, there remains of his "disastrous" domestic policy only the part he took in regard to the Roman Catholic claims, for his vigorous action in the Irish rebellion lies outside the century in hand. Herein, surely, he was no reactionary. Earnestly, warmly, persistently, he advocated emancipation, bitterly regretful that the Union was not cemented by that act of grace. His attitude upon that question was probably, as Eldon perceived,[1] the sole bar to his becoming First Minister. Brougham, while doing full justice to Castlereagh's courage and personal charm, has not forborne to quote some specimens of "the poor, tawdry, ravelled thread of his sorry discourse . . . a rhetoric which often baffled alike the gravity of the Treasury Bench and the art of the reporter." Tom Moore quizzed him unmercifully on this score. "Why," he asked, "is a pump like Viscount Castlereagh?"

> "Because it is a slender thing of wood,
> That up and down its awkward arm doth sway,
> And coolly spout and spout and spout away
> In one weak, washy, everlasting flood."

Let Castlereagh's countrymen ratify the estimate formed of him by the colleague who knew him best. "He possessed a clear mind," said Wellington to Lady Salisbury, "the highest talents, and the most steady principle—more so than anybody I ever knew. He could do everything but speak in Parliament; *that* he could not do."[2]

Well, Castlereagh was off the scene; who was to fill his part? The only Minister fit to lead the House of Commons

[1] See Eldon's letter to Lord Stowell, August 1821 (Twiss, ii. 53; also Buckingham's *George IV.*, i. 195).

[2] Unpublished journal of Frances Mary, Marchioness of Salisbury.

—*periculosæ plenum opus aleæ*—was Peel; but Peel had no word of French; not to be thought of, then, for the Foreign Office. Canning? Well, but Canning some months previously had accepted the Governor-Generalship of India, a room ample enough even for his ambition; at the moment of the crisis he was on his way to bid farewell to his Liverpool constituents. Besides, Canning had more admirers than trustful followers. Some there were who, as Croker put it, thought it folly, in the dearth of parliamentary orators, "to export him to India like the skates and warming-pans to Buenos Ayres"; others, "the best-informed, think that the objection to him for any Cabinet Office, and particularly for one of so much intercourse [as the Foreign Office], is insuperable."[1] But what seemed the inexpugnable objection to Canning was the dislike which George IV., inspired by Eldon and Sidmouth, had conceived for him. The King's unstable mind had forgiven Eldon and learnt to tolerate Liverpool; it was now firmly set against Canning. At the time of Castlereagh's death, his Majesty was upon a Scottish tour, winning rapturous devotion from Walter Scott and the Edinburgh lieges by his gracious carriage in the garb of Old Gaul—philabeg and spleuchan complete—garb which had been proscribed by the penal act of 1747. As if to wipe out the last trace of old scores, the King had the tact to wear tartan of Royal Stuart "set."

The majority of the Cabinet had decided that they could not carry on the Government without Canning. At the first inkling of this the King wrote to Liverpool desiring that there should be no change in the Indian arrangements; "it is my fixed determination that they should remain final and unalterable." But the Cabinet also had made fixed determination; who should decide between two unalterables? Liverpool had tried his hand in 1821, and failed; let Wellington, to whom failure was unknown, take up the matter. When the King returned to London early in September, Wellington was laid up with illness; but he wrote to his Majesty urging him to overcome his objection to Canning.

"If," replied the King, "I could get over that which is

[1] *Croker Papers*, i. 229, 231; Buckingham's *George IV.*, i. 368.

so *intimately connected with my private honour*, all might be well; but how, my friend, is that to be effected?" "The honour of your Majesty," was Wellington's rejoinder, "consists in acts of mercy and grace, and I am convinced that your Majesty's honour is most safe in extending your grace and favour to Mr. Canning."[1]

Canning becomes Foreign Secretary, 13th Sept. 1822.

The King availed himself of this loophole; agreed, with a grimace, that Canning should take the seals of the Foreign Office; and thus, he wrote to Wellington, "ends the last calamity. My reliance is on you, my friend: be watchful. God bless you."[2] "Canning," wrote Brougham to Creevey, "succeeds to Foreign Office, lead of the House, &c.—in short, all of Castlereagh, except his good judgment, good manners, and bad English." Canning owed his restoration entirely to the Duke. Readers will take account presently with what measure of consideration he requited the service.

The partisans of Canning—the detractors of Castlereagh—trace from this date a fundamental change in the foreign policy of Great Britain. Castlereagh has been represented as being in active sympathy with the chief purpose of the Holy Alliance, namely, to crush down every popular movement against absolutism; Canning, as the embodiment of that sympathy which the people of Great Britain have always been quick to extend to oppressed nationalities. How slight is the foundation in fact of this theory may be proved from the official correspondence of the two Ministers; but first one must have in mind the general course of European politics leading to the Congress of Verona.

Events had run a rough course in the Peninsula since Wellington had driven the French across the Pyrenees. Napoleon, in restoring the crown of Spain to Ferdinand VII. after the battle of Leipzig, had taken care that he should not receive salutary counsel on his way to Madrid.

[1] Communication between the King and the Duke was entirely by letters, which disposes of the more dramatic version of the transaction given by Sir H. Bulwer—"You hear, Arthur! on my honour as a gentleman" (*Historical Characters*, ii. 234).

[2] Wellington's *Civil Despatches*, i. 273–284.

Naturally, Ferdinand's journey would have lain through Bayonne; but there he would have met Wellington, so the Emperor caused him to travel through Catalonia. It may be doubted how far Wellington's influence might have prevailed with the King of Spain; as it was, he set about ruling in the unmitigated Bourbon manner. He found his realm under the democratic, single-chambered constitution of 1812; he swept it away, dissolved the Cortes, restored the Inquisition, directed a fierce prosecution of the *Liberales*, and presented himself to his subjects in the hateful mien of a priest-ridden autocrat. Wellington was sent from Paris to remonstrate on behalf of the Powers (24th May 1814), and civil war was averted for the moment. But the great Spanish empire was past praying for under such a ruler. The South American colonies got out of hand; the Floridas were sold to the United States for five million dollars (£1,000,000). Buenos Ayres, Chili, Peru were in arms for independence; finally, in February 1820, sporadic mutinies of the troops in Spain culminated in a general insurrection. O'Donnell, Count Abisbal, who, for suppressing a dangerous mutiny in the previous year, had been rewarded by being deprived of his command, threw in his lot with the revolutionaries and proclaimed the constitution at Ocaña. Practically the whole army joined him, and Ferdinand was forced to summon the Cortes and accept the constitution.

The Spanish Revolution, 1820.

In Portugal, the conditions were reversed. It was not, as in Spain, the presence of a despot that kindled the revolutionary blaze, but the prolonged absence of the ruler from the mother-country. The Regent's Court had never returned from its flight to Brazil in 1807. The populace and the army rose in September and proclaimed the Spanish constitution.

Next the flame spread to the kingdom of the Two Sicilies. The British Government had occupied Sicily during the Napoleonic war, thus securing Ferdinand IV.—a true Bourbon, like Ferdinand of Spain—in that moiety of his dominion; and he had been restored to Naples, the other moiety, on the fall of Napoleon's Murat. Revolution broke out in Calabria and the Abruzzi in July 1820; the

army mutinied and the Spanish constitution was proclaimed. In the Abruzzi men made their living chiefly by charcoal-burning; a humble calling which, by lending its name to the secret society which spread silently in other parts of Italy, acquired a lurid radiance betokening industry not of a peaceful kind. The Italian revolutionaries became known in history as Carbonari.

Three simultaneous revolutions filled the Courts of Europe with boding. Are such things to be allowed under Heaven? or shall not the Great Powers strike in to uphold the divine institution of absolute monarchy? That was the problem before the Cabinet of crowned heads assembled at Troppau in October 1820. They decided that Spain and Portugal were at safe distance; but that the throne of the Two Sicilies must be supported, were it only in the interest of Austria, who lay nearest the seat of contagion. Lord Stewart, Castlereagh's half-brother,[1] and ambassador at Vienna, was at Troppau representing King George's Government, but his instructions forbade him to commit Great Britain to interfere further than to protect aged King Ferdinand from violence. The Congress adjourned to Laybach, and invited Ferdinand to meet them there. He escaped from Naples in a British man-of-war; that was the extent of interference sanctioned by the absolutist Castlereagh—free passage to an old gentleman whose household was in an uproar. Ferdinand had sworn to maintain the constitution imposed upon him by the Carbonari; but the Powers (Stewart raising no objection) required him to renounce it. His Majesty perjured himself with utmost docility. An Austrian army marched upon Naples, occupied Sicily, and the revolution was over. When, in March 1821, the subjects of the King

Congress of Troppau, Oct. 1820.

[1] Succeeded him as 3rd Marquess of Londonderry. He had served throughout the Peninsular war as Wellington's Adjutant-General, a man of undoubted ability, but wanting in the single-minded loyalty of his half-brother. Wellington complained of his intrigues in Spain (see *Croker Papers*, i. 346); and again during the Vienna Congress of 1815, when Stewart, as ambassador, wrote home despatches without the knowledge of Wellington, who, as plenipotentiary to the Congress, was his chief. He did exactly the same at the Congress of Verona in 1822, when Canning informed the Duke of what was being done behind his back. "C'est la plus mauvaise pièce que vous avez," whispered Metternich to Wellington.

of Piedmont played some revolutionary pranks, another Austrian army put an extinguisher upon them also.

The sovereigns of Austria, Prussia, and Russia, satisfied with the restoration of divinely appointed institutions (Ferdinand's perjury was in so good a cause, one sees), issued a circular to every Court in Europe, proclaiming what they had done and what they proposed to do, enunciating also the doctrine ("this eternal truth," they called it) that "useful or necessary changes in legislation, and in the administration of States, ought only to emanate from the free will and the intelligent and well-weighed conviction of those whom God has rendered responsible for power."[1] So comfortably had these magnates dismissed from memory and calculation the lessons of the French Terror!

Manifesto of the three Powers, 12th May 1821.

This manifesto, as may be conceived, made some stir in constitutional England. There was hot bickering over it in Parliament, Lord Stewart's presence at the Congress seeming to imply the assent of the Cabinet to a theory of government to which Magna Charta had dealt the death-blow. Castlereagh in January 1821 issued a disclaimer, of which, as throwing light upon the alleged initiation by Canning of a policy of non-intervention, it may be convenient to print some passages alongside of that statesman's utterance eighteen months later:—

Lord Castlereagh, Circular to British Ministers at Foreign Courts, 19th January 1821.

"I should not have felt it necessary to have made any communication to the British representatives at foreign courts . . . had it not been for a circular communication which has been addressed by the Courts of Austria, Prussia, and Russia to their several missions, and which,

Mr. Canning at Liverpool, 30th August 1822.

"In the times in which we live, there is, disguise it how we may, a struggle going on—in some countries an open, in some a tacit struggle—between the principles of monarchy and democracy. God be praised that in that struggle we have not any part to take. . . . It is not, as

[1] This remarkable document is printed in the *Annual Register* for 1821, pp. 599-603.

if not adverted to, might (however unintentionally) convey very erroneous impressions of the past, as well as of the present sentiments, of the British Government. It has become, therefore, necessary to inform you that the King has felt himself obliged to decline becoming a party to the measures in question. . . . The system of measures . . . would be in direct repugnance to the fundamental laws of this country. But even if this decisive objection did not exist, the British Government would, nevertheless, regard the principles on which these measures rest, to be such as could not be safely admitted as a system of international law. They are of opinion that their adoption would inevitably sanction, and, in the hands of less beneficent Monarchs, might hereafter lead to, a much more frequent and extensive interference in the internal transactions of States, than they are persuaded is intended by the August Parties from whom they proceed."

it appears to me, the duty of this country to side either with the assailants, when they aim at too much, nor with those who stand upon the defensive, when they will grant nothing. England has only to maintain herself on the basis of her own solid and settled Constitution, firm, unshaken, a spectatress interested in the contest only by her sympathies; not a partisan on either side, but, for the sake of both, a model, and ultimately perhaps an umpire. Should we be led by any false impulse of chivalrous benevolence to participate in the struggle itself, we commit and thereby impair our authority; we abandon the position in which we might hereafter do most good, and may bring the danger of a foreign struggle home to our own hearths, and to our own institutions."

It would be difficult to produce passages from different sources more identical in sentiment. While Castlereagh was opposed to the joint interference of the three Powers in the internal affairs of a friendly country, he recognised that Austria could not be indifferent to a conflagration on her frontiers. *Proximus ardet*—"We desire to leave Austria unembarrassed in her course"; but he declines to let his Government be any party to that course. He was most scrupulous to keep his country clear of any entanglement with the proceedings of the three Powers forming the Holy Alliance.

There is apparent the same harmony between the policy of Castlereagh and of Canning in regard to the

furious insurrection of the Greeks against their Turkish rulers which broke out in 1821. Russian sympathies ran strongly towards the Greeks, both on account of their common religion and because of the hereditary enmity between the great northern Power and the Porte. But how could the Emperor Alexander, head and front of the Holy Alliance, take up arms on behalf of a nation rising against its legitimate rulers? While he stood hesitating the war of Greek independence ran its bloody course, culminating in March 1822 in the horrible massacre of Scio ("old Chios of the wines," as Carlyle reminds readers), when, within the space of ten days, some 20,000 or 30,000 of the island population were butchered by Turkish troops. Fifty thousand more were sold as slaves; and at the end of July it was reckoned that out of 120,000 natives only 900 remained in the island.

The Greek War of Independence, 1821–22.

It required a cool head and steady hand to restrain the people of Great Britain from melling in this business. Numbers of British volunteers enrolled themselves under Ypsilanti and the Greek leaders. Good Mr. Wilberforce called upon the Government in the name of common humanity to join with the leading Powers in casting the Turks out of Europe altogether; thus anticipating by half a century the "bag and baggage" policy so passionately advocated by Mr. Gladstone in the free atmosphere of opposition—so judiciously abandoned when he came into power. Castlereagh had little difficulty in convincing the House that the general tranquillity of the human race would be ill promoted by turning five millions of Turks loose in the heart of Asia. On the general question he took stand upon the recognised principles of international law, which sanctioned no interference between a foreign government and its subjects. War undertaken on behalf of a Christian population oppressed by Mohammedan rulers must be a war of religions—the Cross against the Crescent; and Castlereagh spoke with responsibility as Minister of a monarch with millions of Mohammedan subjects.

The Greeks, worsted in almost every encounter on land, proved masters of the Turks at sea. In the summer

of 1822 their craft were swarming so closely round the coasts of the Morea that the Turkish army on shore was well-nigh cut off from reinforcements and supplies. The Hetæria seemed in a fair way of winning independence.

The Congress of Vienna (Verona), Sept.-Oct. 1822.

The Holy Alliance, which had undertaken to regulate the affairs of Europe by a kind of Cabinet of crowned heads, was about to assemble again in congress at Vienna. The situation in Greece would come uppermost for discussion. Castlereagh was to have represented Great Britain at the Congress. After his death, it was far on in September before Wellington, appointed as his successor, was well enough to set out from England. He was instructed, in passing through Paris, to confer with the French Government upon the attitude to be observed by France and Great Britain towards the Spanish revolution. He found matters far advanced in Paris. An army of 100,000 men had been mobilised for the invasion of Spain, for the purpose of setting worthless King Ferdinand on his legs and ridding him of his *Liberales* and their new constitution. Wellington succeeded in convincing M. de Villèle, Louis XVIII.'s Minister, that the project was little auspicious for the peace of Europe, and it was suspended for that time.

Having written to ask Canning for fresh instructions as to the policy he was to pursue in the Congress, the Duke hurried on to Vienna, and found the sovereigns on the point of adjourning to Verona. Up to this point he had been acting according to instructions which he knew to have been drawn up by Castlereagh. As a loyal public servant, he was under obligation to give effect to any modification which the new Foreign Minister might desire to introduce into his predecessor's scheme; but Canning's command was "As you were!" The heads of instruction drawn up by Castlereagh were to be the Duke's manual.

"I have nothing to communicate to your Grace which can in any degree vary the tenour of the sentiments expressed in the Heads of Instruction of which your Grace is already in possession, or of the conduct which your Grace is therein directed to observe. But some things have occurred since your Grace's

departure, *tending so strongly to confirm those views of policy under which those heads of instruction were drawn*, that I think it right to lose no time in reporting to you those occurrences for your Grace's information and guidance."[1]

Inasmuch as it has been made a special reflection upon Castlereagh that he hardened his heart against the cause of Greek freedom, and wrote to the Emperor of Russia dissuading him from declaring war against the Porte on behalf of the insurgents, it is important to ascertain whether Canning held any other views at this time. He certainly has received credit for larger sympathies with the cause of liberty than those of which Castlereagh was capable, but what proof thereof did he give in his actions?

From Instructions drawn up by Lord Castlereagh for the British Plenipotentiary at the Congress of Vienna, August 1822.

. . . "Considering the course pursued by Great Britain now for so many years towards the local governments exercising dominion in South America, and her avowed neutrality as between the Greeks and the Turks, it may be difficult for this country, if a *de facto* government shall actually be established in the Morea and the western provinces of Turkey, to refuse to it the ordinary privileges of a belligerent; but it must be done with caution, and without ostentation, lest it should render the Turks wholly inaccessible to our remonstrances."

Mr. Canning in reply to the Duke of Wellington's request for further instructions, 27th Sept. 1822.

. . . "The reasoning which applies to the relations of Turkey and Russia applies still more clearly and forcibly to the discussions between the Porte and the Greeks. In these discussions we have no pretence of a right to interfere. . . . Neither, therefore, in respect to the external discussions of the Porte with Russia, nor in respect to its internal discussions with its own subjects, can we justly or reasonably be expected to take any other part than that which we have always taken."

It was with scripts such as these before her that Harriet Martineau informed careless readers that "where Londonderry's (Castlereagh's) despatches would have been vapid and meagre . . . Canning's were frank and glowing"; it

[1] *Foreign Office Records.* The italics are mine.

was upon evidence like this that she exclaimed: "Here, in our view, is the parting point between the former and later policy of England"—a point, attention being called to it, fulfilling Euclid's definition as having "position but no magnitude."

Continuity of policy is not less apparent upon the Spanish question, which, when the Congress reassembled at Verona on 16th October, was the chief matter under consideration. Among eight sovereigns and their Ministers,[1] Wellington stood as a minority of one. Alexander of Russia was bent upon war—offered to march 150,000 troops into Spain for coercion of the Cortes. Austria and Prussia, their treasure-chests an aching void, would fain have peace, but dared not thwart the Tzar, who insisted that the Holy Alliance should deal with Spain in like manner as it had handled Naples in 1820–21.[2]

The affairs of Spain, 1820–1822.

France was divided in counsel. The Government in Paris, with Wellington's warning fresh in mind, sought to avoid war, but their Foreign Minister, Duc de Montmorency, who represented them at Verona, was all for strong measures. Wellington alone firmly declined assent to any form of menace to the Spanish Government, and Wellington was the one man in Europe whose single voice could affect the result.[3] "I verily believe," wrote Canning to the Duke on 15th November, "that if we escape the Spanish war, it will be owing exclusively to your experience of one; and that any other negotiator but yourself would have reasoned *politically* and *morally* against it to no purpose."

The upshot was a middle course. Montmorency resigned; Europe was saved from the danger of an enormous Russian army invading Spain; but all the Powers, except Great Britain, broke off diplomatic relations with the Spanish Government—recalling their ambassadors from Madrid.

So soon as the French Chambers opened on 28th January 1823, it was manifest that the Absolutists had prevailed with the senile King of France. They put into his mouth a speech from the throne, announcing the recall of the

[1] Wellington's *Civil Despatches*, i. 491.
[2] Ibid., i. 520. [3] Ibid., 536.

French ambassador from Madrid and the readiness of 100,000 troops to cross the frontier, "invoking the God of St. Louis to preserve the throne of Spain for a descendant of Henri IV. Let Ferdinand be free to give to his people the institutions which they cannot have except from him!"

Here was the old Bourbon theory of government—the doctrine of autocracy and divine right—naked and not ashamed, oblivious of all that had come and gone. The nations had been well sickened with it; how could England remain the ally of France?

King Louis's manifesto reached London almost simultaneously with the opening of Parliament on 4th February. The zeal of one of Canning's ablest partisans, and his anxiety to present Canning's policy in favourable contrast with that of Castlereagh, have betrayed him into something short of perfect candour in his account of what followed:—

"Lord Castlereagh had waited from 8th of December 1820[1] to the 19th of January 1821 before he published a timid rejoinder to the declaration of the allied monarchs.[2] Canning waited 'not a week, not even a day,' to tell France that no British statesman 'could uphold or defend' the policy which Louis XVIII. announced. 'If that speech were to be understood,' said Canning in the House of Commons, 'as the plain meaning of the words in which it was couched naturally suggested, no British statesman who valued his character as a member of a free state could either think or hear of his country being made a party to negotiations for the purpose of discussing such monstrous proposals.'"[3]

Language, no doubt, of reassuring vigour; but is it not a reasonable inference from the above passage that these words were spoken without waiting "a week, not even a day"? Dates have an illuminating power which it is not

[1] The circular was only issued from Laybach on 8th December, and could not have reached Castlereagh before the 16th at earliest.

[2] Readers may judge of its timidity by referring to the original (*State Papers*, vol. viii. p. 1161). To most minds there will appear as near an approach to timidity in Canning's despatch to Sir Charles Stuart of 3rd February, in which he complains that King Louis's speech "places his Majesty's Government in a situation of great embarrassment; an embarrassment which is all the more sensibly felt by them on account of the necessity of making some disclosure of opinion in the Speech to be delivered from the throne at the opening of this session of Parliament" next day (*State Papers*, x. 51).

[3] Sir S. Walpole's *England*, ii. 348.

good to dispense with. Canning's despatch to the British ambassador in Paris certainly was sent off without delay of a week or a day; it is dated 3rd February; but his speech in the House of Commons was not made until after two months and a half of deliberation and consultation with his colleagues—to wit, on 16th April.

Let there be an end, then, to this exaltation of Canning at the expense of Castlereagh. Canning built, and built well, upon Castlereagh's foundation, adapting the edifice to changing circumstance and the political growth of the age. He had the priceless gift, denied to his predecessor, of recommending his measures in lucid argument and scintillating phrase.

Beyond dissociating the country from any complicity with France the Government would not go. Lord Grey and the Opposition in both Houses, if they had had their way, would have plunged Great Britain into another Peninsular war; but the addresses to the King which they moved, praying for more prompt and decided measures against France, were rejected by large majorities.

CHAPTER XII

The Spanish-American colonies—Promulgation of the Monroe doctrine—Recognition of the South American States—The affairs of Greece and Turkey—The Protectorate of Greece offered to Great Britain—Treaty between Great Britain, France, and Russia—Turkish atrocities in the Morea—Battle of Navarino—The first Cabinet crisis of 1827—Wellington throws up the office of Commander-in-Chief—Canning's administration—Death of Canning.

WAR ran the course prepared for it in Spain by the distracted state of that country. No man knew the ground and its difficulties better than Wellington, yet he predicted an easy triumph for the French arms—"no more resistance in marching to Madrid than I meet in going to the Ordnance Office."[1] So it turned out. Badajos, Carthagena, and Cadiz capitulated in October; on 13th November Ferdinand VII. was restored to his capital, to resume his reign as *Rey retto*—autocrat—over a bankrupt realm, fenced against the flower of his subjects by 45,000 French sabres and bayonets. In that uneasy posture let us leave him. "*Laissez faire et laissez venir*," were Canning's instructions to the British Minister at Madrid; "Pozzo may bustle and Ferdinand may swear; but sooner or later, if we are only quiet and give no hold against us, things must go pretty much as we wish, or at least as we allow."[2] Henceforward British statesmen have little concern with the internal affairs of Spain.

With her external affairs the case was different. For more than twenty years her South American colonies had been in revolt; fourteen years ago, as readers will not have forgotten, the Portland Cabinet were considering whether most injury might not be done to Spain by aiding the insurgents in the New World.[3] Spain settled that question by accepting

The Spanish-American colonies, 1822.

[1] 6th March 1823 (*Creevey Papers*, ii. 64).
[2] Canning to Sir W. A'Court, 31st Dec. 1823.
[3] See page 97 *supra*.

Great Britain as her ally; since which these colonies practically had become independent States. The mother-country had lost all hold upon them, but persisted in commissioning cruisers and privateers to prey upon foreign traders with the insurgent ports. British merchants suffered most, the trade being chiefly in their hands; their ships and cargoes were exposed to what was no less than organised piracy. Castlereagh lodged protest after protest with the Spanish Government, which, indeed, exercised almost as much authority in the planet Mars as in Mexico. Finally, Canning declared that the British squadron must clear the seas, and land a force in Cuba for the better extirpation of piracy.

When Canning's despatch (18th October 1822) was delivered in Madrid, Wellington was at Verona, doing his best to avert interference in Spanish affairs by the Holy Alliance. England was the only screen between the Cortes and Russian invasion. The constitutional party was then in power; having a virtual monopoly of enlightenment and common-sense, they recognised the hopelessness of any attempt to re-establish authority on Bourbon lines over the revolted colonies. Their reply to Canning was a décree throwing open the South American ports to the trade of all nations, and an assignment of forty million reals "upon the Great Book" as compensation to British traders who had suffered loss, which seems a handsome figure, so long as one does not inquire too closely into its equivalent in English money.

"Don't pull up your stockings in a melon-field," runs a Chinese proverb, "or people will think you are stealing." French susceptibilities were ever on the alert against Great Britain obtaining commercial advantage over other nations. This arrangement with the Cortes, what did it mean but an attempt by perfidious Albion to secure a monopoly of trade with the revolted colonies? France had reconquered Spain for his Catholic Majesty; she must now recover for him his South American territories, looking after her own interests over there at the same time. Wellington, returning from Verona, was instructed to tarry in Paris and endeavour to dissuade King Louis's Government from

undertaking any such enterprise. De Villèle, "excessively warm," informed him that "France could not submit to an extension of our advantages and our territory." Canning made no official rejoinder to this threat, merely observing to Wellington that he longed to tell M. de Villèle that if France sent a large fleet to American waters, "we will send a larger, to watch (at least) *their* operations."[1] His next step was the appointment of consuls in the South American ports to look after the interests of British traders, many of whom had set up business there. The Cortes had declared these ports open, yet Spanish privateers continued to harass foreign merchantmen, seven-eighths whereof were British. Events were making inevitable the recognition of the new States. The Prince de Polignac, French Minister in London, admitted to Canning (9th October 1823) that they could never again be brought in subjection to Spain, but stipulated for the establishment of a monarchical or aristocratic form of government.[2]

Next, on 26th December, Ferdinand of Spain issued an invitation to "his dear and intimate allies" for a conference at Paris "to aid Spain in adjusting the affairs of the revolted countries of America." But Great Britain had learnt what to expect from congresses. "We protested at Laybach; we remonstrated at Verona; our protest was treated as waste paper; our remonstrances mingled with the air."[3] Canning declined to send a representative to the congress, declaring to the Duke of Wellington his purpose of "taking our line beforehand."[4] He explained that while Great Britain had no intention of obtaining

[1] Wellington's *Civil Despatches*, i. 650. The vivacity of Canning's despatches at all times makes it difficult to refrain from longer extracts than space will allow. They will repay perusal. As Wellington's are the best military despatches ever written, so Canning's is the most readable civil correspondence.

[2] "It was *because* I found that there was no relying safely on anything that the French Government said to us of *their* views and intentions; it was *because* I found them holding different languages to different powers, that I resorted to publicity, and gave to the world the conference with Prince Polignac; a disclosure which (I admit) sealed the fate of the question, and which must rule all our future steps in the progress of it" (Canning to Lord Granville, 15th Nov. 1824).

[3] Stapleton's *Canning*, ii. 37.

[4] Wellington's *Civil Despatches*, ii. 137–141.

exclusive privileges or fresh territory in South America, she insisted upon equal freedom of commerce for all nations. It was the desire of his Government that King Ferdinand "should have the grace and advantage of leading the way" in the recognition of the new States; but if he declined to do so, then it was manifest that "so large a portion of the globe could not remain much longer without any recognised political existence or any definite political connection with the established Governments of Europe," and these States must be recognised as *de facto* governments.

The Monroe Doctrine, 2nd Dec. 1824.

Simultaneously with this declaration there arrived in Europe President Monroe's memorable message to Congress of 2nd December 1823, not without its warning to the Powers. His Government had recognised the autonomy of the revolted colonies and shown a warm interest in their progress. It is evident, was the gist of its reference to the Spanish-American question, that Spain has lost all part in the affairs of this continent. She seems to have got into a fresh muddle over there in Europe; her neighbours may settle that as best they can. But over here—hands off! we will permit no interference with these young and promising States.[1]

King Ferdinand's conference took place under these gloomy conditions—Great Britain holding brusquely aloof and the American showing his teeth in that rude manner. What could the plenipotentiaries do but sit round a table and talk—about anything, except a French expedition to South America? They talked, then, and separated, without effecting the slightest change in the affairs of this planet. Deeply shocked, these many-titled and be-ribboned gentle-

[1] It was in this message that the famous "Monroe doctrine" was first formulated, of date 2nd December 1823. It declared that the United States would not permit the intervention of any European Power in the war between Spain and the "new governments," and "that the American continents . . . are henceforth not to be considered as subjects for future colonisation by any European Power." Canning demurred to this; he said that "the United States had no right to take umbrage at the establishment of new colonies from Europe in any such unoccupied parts of the American continent." Nevertheless, no European Power has cared to test the question since.

men, by Canning's unorthodox diplomacy. Folios of remonstrance flowed in from Metternich upon the Duke of Wellington. "L'Angleterre, peut-elle un seul instant vouloir lier sa marche politique à celle des Etats-Unis d'Amérique? Le coup d'œil politique le plus ordinaire suffit pour démontrer l'impossibilité d'une entreprise pareille!"[1] Blood thicker than water, your Excellency! The *marche politique* of the United States was much more in accord with British sentiments than was that of the Holy Alliance. Even Sir Henry Wellesley was pained by the indifference displayed to the opinion of the Court of Vienna, to which he was accredited—"so different," he wrote privately to his brother, the Duke of Wellington, "from what it was in the time of Lord Londonderry."[2]

Courtly politicians might wince at the want of good breeding among these islanders, and no harm come of it; but the question brought sad discord into Liverpool's cabinet. The High Tories—Wellington, Eldon, Sidmouth, Westmorland, and Peel (no stiffer Tory than Peel in those years)—strongly opposed the policy of recognition as inconsistent with "our own honour and good name";[3] Liverpool and the majority of the cabinet yielded to Canning's arguments, based, not only on the interests of British commerce, but on the effects of incorporation of the new countries with the United States, which Liverpool warned Wellington would "in a very few years prove fatal to our greatness, if not endanger our safety."[4] It can scarcely be doubted that Castlereagh, had he lived, would have viewed the problem in the same light as Canning, and acted on the same lines; but he would have carried the King and the Tory section of the cabinet with him.[5] Canning, careless to conciliate the minority of his colleagues, and powerless, as yet, to influence the King, irritated both by paying

Recognition of the South American States, Dec. 1824.

[1] Wellington's *Civil Despatches*, ii. 207.
[2] Ibid., 205.
[3] Ibid., 364.
[4] Ibid., 366.
[5] Castlereagh's instructions to Wellington on starting for the Congress of Verona in 1822 contain the following sentence: "But the case of the revolted colonies is different. It is evident from the course which events have taken that their recognition as independent States has become merely a question of time."

court to Brougham and the Opposition. The King consulted privately with Wellington upon everything, which Canning deeply resented.

"I have the highest respect for the Duke of Wellington," he wrote to Liverpool, "and I do not propose to limit the confidences of the King. But when one finds that all that passes between the King and one's self is repeated as matter of course to a third person, and that third person one who thinks himself at liberty to repeat it to others, at the same time that he conceals the fact of his knowing it from one's self, it is high time to look about one, and to beware of what Burke calls 'traps and mines.'" [1]

Never was suspicion more ill founded. Canning owed his position in the Cabinet entirely to that private influence over the King to which he was objecting. He might surely have perceived that when Wellington erred it was from excess, not defect, of candour. The duke wrote to Liverpool expressing regret that he could not agree with him on the South American question, "but, as you know, I am not inclined to carry these differences further than necessary; and I have advised, and shall invariably advise, his Majesty to follow the advice of his Cabinet." In conclusion, he offered to resign his office if that would make things easier for Liverpool.[2] Wellington was as good as his word. When the proposals of the Cabinet were submitted to the King at Windsor on 16th December, he sent for the duke from London, and it was after an interview with him next day that his Majesty wrote to Liverpool to say that while he found himself "under the necessity of differing from the majority of the Cabinet . . . he would not oppose himself to the measures considered for the benefit of his subjects and for the promotion of the navigation of the country by those to whom the King has given his confidence." [3]

Accordingly, diplomatic relations were established with the governments of Buenos Ayres, Mexico, and Columbia before the end of 1824. Every court in Europe was scandalised by what was regarded as a betrayal of the monarchical system, but England was strong enough now to hold her own line.

[1] Wellington's *Civil Despatches*, ii. 325. [2] Ibid., 366. [3] Ibid., 368.

The recognition of the former dependencies of Spain did not settle the whole South American difficulty. There remained the question of Portugal's great colony of Brazil, complicated, in respect of Great Britain, by considerations which had not arisen in the case of Spain. Portugal was the oldest and most constant ally of Great Britain; the two kingdoms being bound to each other by treaties which had been kept inviolate for 180 years. But treaties of old were made between sovereigns, not peoples; their observance was complicated when *de facto* governments were established in defiance of sovereign authority. The Portuguese revolution had been caused by King John VI.'s refusal to bring his court and government back to Lisbon from Rio de Janeiro. When quiet was restored, John returned to his capital, accepted the constitution, and left his son Dom Pedro as Regent in Brazil. John was now no autocrat, but the French invasion of Spain in support of autocracy brought about a fresh revolution in Portugal, this time against the Constitution. In February 1823 the Absolutists rose with the king's second son, Dom Miguel, as leader, swept Cortes and Constitution into the lumber heap, re-established unlimited monarchy, and applied to the British Government for military support to the restored régime. "My throne is in danger," was the appeal in effect; "you are bound by our treaty to come to my help;" adding, as it were *sotto voce*, "If you don't help me, France will; and you won't like that!" The prospect of French bayonets bristling once more in every quarter of the Peninsula—of despotism re-established by French arms—was one most repugnant to British ministers. Wellington strongly urged the despatch of 6000 troops at once; but he was forced to add: "I conclude that it is determined to discountenance the demand for troops, because we have none to send."[1] That was the naked truth. Retrenchment had run its course until, as Liverpool confessed to Canning, "we have no troops whatever in England for any foreign service, scarcely enough to make up for the waste constantly

The case of Brazil, 1823.

[1] The whole correspondence is instructive: Wellington's *Civil Despatches*, ii. 110–115, 276, 281, &c.

occurring in our colonies and foreign garrisons. . . . If troops are to be sent, they must he raised; if troops are to be raised, Parliament must be called"—are you prepared to bring that swarm round your ears?[1]

Finally, what Wellington deprecated as "a half measure" was adopted: a squadron was sent to the Tagus, but no troops. On 9th May King John took refuge on board a British man-of-war, and renewed his application for British troops. His own army—Wellington's "fighting cocks," as they had been on a day—had rotted into impotence and disaffection. He had no wish to rule as autocrat, but the French party in his ministry was strong and allowed him no peace—would England see the French back in Lisbon?

Canning knew his House of Commons too well to relish the prospect of debates on so delicate a matter; yet debates there must be if British troops were to be sent. But was not George IV. King of Hanover as well as of Great Britain? and could not his excellent Hanoverian troops be employed in this work (at the charges of Portugal, of course), and so avoid all fuss in Parliament?

The French Government got wind—was allowed, perhaps, to get wind—of the projected expedition; it was no part of their game to allow it to go forward; rather than that, they offered Canning an assurance that they would not enter Portugal, and that part of the difficulty was well disposed of.

There remained the question how the independence of Brazil could be recognised without violating letter or spirit of ancient treaties. Events in Brazil helped towards a solution. As the Portuguese had risen in revolution when King John refused to return to them, so the Brazilians rose so soon as he did so return. They proclaimed their country an independent empire with the Regent, Dom Pedro, as emperor. Great Britain was bound under the treaty of 1642 "to defend and protect all the conquests or colonies belonging to the Crown of Portugal against all its enemies, as well future as present." The dilemma would have been acute had King John stood upon his rights. Fortunately, he accepted the situation. In consideration of being re-

[1] Liverpool to Canning, 1st Aug. 1823.

cognised as Emperor of Brazil during his life (he died in 1826), he agreed to surrender the rule to his son, and independence was granted to Brazil on 29th August 1825.

While affairs were thus drifting to a settlement in the far West, a deep centre of disturbance continued to lie over eastern Europe. The Greeks valiantly continued their struggle for independence, while Russia and Turkey, irreconcilably and chronically at variance, hovered on the brink of war. The Emperor Alexander was restrained by the principles of the Holy Alliance from giving effect to the wishes of his Church and people by striking in for Christian Greece against her infidel oppressors; but he had other causes of difference with the Porte. So early as 1821 he had withdrawn his ambassador from Constantinople, in displeasure at the delay in the evacuation of Moldavia and Wallachia by the Turks, and their failure to regulate the traffic through the Dardanelles on terms favourable to Russian commerce. In the autumn of 1823, after the Greeks had driven the Turks out of the Morea and their independence seemed to be practically won, he invited a conference of the Powers at St. Petersburg to determine the future of the Orient. Great Britain, as a neutral, declined to send a representative so long as diplomatic relations between Russia and the Porte were broken off. Canning and his colleagues were unanimous that the conference must be one of neutrals in the existing strife, and Russia could not be deemed neutral so long as she was without an ambassador at Constantinople. At last, in August 1824, Alexander issued an *ukase*, appointing M. de Ribeaupierre to the vacant embassy; but upon various protests, extending over two years, de Ribeaupierre's departure was put off. No representative of Great Britain attended the conference, and no settlement was arrived at.

The affairs of Turkey and Greece, 1821-27.

The war in Greece went on—desultory, with bursts of inhuman fury on both sides. In 1824 it seemed impossible that Turkey should recover her authority in the Peloponnesus, when the Sultan turned the tide by invoking the aid of Mehemet Ali, the able and warlike Pasha of Egypt. Mehemet's stepson, Ibrahim Pasha, took command of an

Egyptian contingent—troops trained on the European model—landed at Modon, captured Navarino, and joined hands with Reschid Pasha, who had invaded Greece from the north, and had been besieging Missolonghi ineffectively for many months. The brave garrison, weakened by famine and disease, could not withstand the onslaught of fresh troops; they were cut to pieces in a final sortie, and on 26th April 1826 the town was delivered up to the usual horrors of a Turkish sack—the siege having lasted within five days of a whole year. The sufferings of the Greeks wrought sympathy with their cause to a very high pitch in England. Already had Byron been struck down by fever at Missolonghi in 1824, when on the point of leading an expedition against Lepanto. Lord Cochrane, his work in South America being concluded by the recognition of the empire of Brazil,[1] was now appointed commander-in-chief of the Greek fleet, and Sir Richard Church became generalissimo of the Greek army. Against these appointments, also against the enlistment of British volunteers, Count Metternich bitterly protested on behalf of Austria, declaring that they constituted an infringement of neutrality. Nevertheless, the British Government had remained scrupulously neutral, and one of Canning's partisans has done him serious injustice by declaring that he "inaugurated" a new policy towards insurgent Greece in 1823.[2] No minister ever sunk his own sympathies in a more statesmanlike degree than did Canning in conducting foreign affairs through this most

[1] Thomas, Lord Cochrane, afterwards 10th Earl of Dundonald, had served with great distinction in the Royal Navy, attaining the rank of post-captain. He entered Parliament, and attacked the Tory Government as relentlessly and persistently as if they had been a French fleet. In 1814 he was found guilty by a jury of fraud, in propagating a false report that Napoleon had fallen, whereby he and some friends made a large profit out of a rise in the funds. He was sentenced to a heavy fine, a year's imprisonment, and exposure in the pillory. The last part of his punishment was remitted, but he was expelled from the House of Commons, deprived of his commission in the navy and of his rank as a Knight of the Bath. In 1818 he took command of the revolutionary fleet of Chile, and when that Spanish colony had secured its independence, to which his splendid seamanship greatly contributed, he gave his services to the new Emperor of Brazil. The Whig party had warmly defended him in Parliament, and when they came into power in 1830 Cochrane was restored to his rank in the Royal Navy.

[2] Principal Donaldson, *Encyclopædia Britannica*, *s.v.* "Greece."

tangled skein. On 27th September 1825 he wrote a long despatch to Sir Henry Wellesley, British minister at Vienna, replying to representations by Count Metternich. This paper seems to have been wholly overlooked by those who ascribe the ultimate interference of Great Britain in the quarrel to a change initiated by Canning in the doctrine of international obligations. Space may only be found here for a few sentences, but the whole despatch ought to be read in order to understand rightly the attitude of King George's cabinet.

"A maritime power, possessing extensive coasts within the reach of the operations of such a war as that now unhappily raging between the Turks and the Greeks, and protecting an extended trade, amidst the conflict of two parties, not over strict in their estimate of belligerent rights . . . must naturally be exposed to misrepresentations on both sides. . . . That both parties should think themselves aggrieved by our proceedings is, perhaps, the best proof of the steadiness with which, under circumstances of exceeding difficulty and complication, the naval officers of his Majesty and the Chief of the Ionian Government have contrived to adjust the balance of neutrality. One party contends that all Governments should consider the other party as rebels, and therefore as not qualified to claim the legitimate rights of belligerents. The other party puts forward the plea that, in a struggle for emancipation from tyrannical rule, they are entitled to expect more than the strict laws of war authorise them to claim at the hands of all free nations. We, who neither admit the plea of the one party nor subscribe to the doctrine of the other, respect in both alike the lawful exercise of their strict belligerent rights, while we resist the extravagant extension of these rights by either. . . . A British subject is master of his own movements, and is not amenable to punishment or restraint for his declarations. He may quit England when he pleases—he may go with the avowed *intention* of joining Greek or Turk. . . . You may safely assert, however, that the British Government is fully alive to all the inconveniences of Lord Cochrane's supposed intentions, if carried into effect. You may give the most positive assurance that we do not connive at carrying them into effect, and that such means as are legally within our power shall be immediately employed to counteract them."[1]

Two days after this despatch was penned, Canning received the Greek deputies who waited upon him with an offer of the crown of Greece to a member of the royal

[1] Wellington's *Civil Despatches*, ii. 503–507.

family of Great Britain. The firm tone of his refusal to entertain this proposal, and the reasons for it, are to be noted. "There existed between England and Turkey treaties of very ancient date and of uninterrupted obligation which the Turks faithfully observed."[1] Further, "the peace of the world rests upon general treaties between the Powers of Europe, of which the primary and pervading stipulation is that no one of the Powers parties to them shall aggrandise himself at the expense of the others." If Great Britain should accept the protectorate of Greece, or a member of her royal house the crown, other Powers would be relieved from their obligations, and "the separate interest of Greece would be forgotten in the general confusion."

The protectorate of Greece offered to Great Britain, 29th Sept. 1825.

Nothing, then, stands out more clearly than Canning's resolution to preserve his country from being dragged into the Grecian imbroglio. A fresh proclamation of neutrality was issued on 3rd October; it remains to be told how in the end British powder came to be burnt in the strife.

Alexander of Russia, having died on 1st December 1825,[2] was succeeded by the younger of his surviving brothers, Nicholas. The Duke of Wellington was appointed to convey to St. Petersburg the usual message of congratulation on the opening of a new reign, and was charged at the same time to endeavour to obtain the Tzar's consent to pacific mediation by Great Britain between Turkey and Greece, and to dissuade him from declaring war against Turkey, as he was understood to have in contemplation.[3] Wellington found Nicholas irritated to the last degree by the characteristic procrastination of the Ottoman government, and on the point of sending an ultimatum to Constantinople. Despite all that Wellington could say, the ultimatum was sent off, demanding complete fulfilment of the treaty of Bucharest within six weeks. As it turned out, war was averted by the submission of the Porte to the demands of Russia, which demands, be it

[1] Wellington's *Civil Despatches*, ii. 509.

[2] At Taganrog on the Sea of Azov. News of his illness only reached St. Petersburg a week after his death, and prayers for his recovery continued for several days longer.

[3] Wellington's *Civil Despatches*, iii. 85.

said, Wellington regarded as no more than just. But that result was the last that anybody concerned expected; warlike preparations were being pushed forward in Russia; and Nicholas, who had shown the utmost indifference at first to the misfortunes of the Christian community in Greece, suddenly woke up to the importance of exerting himself in favour of those who would so soon become his allies. A secret protocol was drawn up proposing joint mediation of Great Britain and Russia between the combatants, a scheme to which, although Austria and Prussia afterwards declined to be parties, the French Government gave cordial support. This was a great object attained, for the war in Greece had entered upon a desperate phase. It was reported that Ibrahim Pasha, having gained the upper hand in the Morea, had received orders from the Sultan to exterminate the Greek population by slaughter and deportation to Egypt. Europe—Great Britain especially—stood aghast at the horrible prospect. Be the law of nations what it might, it must be ultimately subject to considerations of common humanity. Could any ruler be suffered to deal thus with his subjects—to enact on a vaster scale the circumscribed atrocities of Scio?

It had been stipulated that the Anglo-Russian agreement should be kept secret, but within a month of its signature its purport had leaked down some backstair, and the gist of the protocol, magnified into a treaty, was published in the *Times*. Canning expressed much indignation at this breach of confidence on somebody's part,[1] and there is no ground for the suspicion with which his own intimate relations with the press seem to have inspired even some of his own colleagues. Far more likely is it that the leak was situated in the Russian Embassy of London. There was scarcely any limit to the activity and knowledge of the Ambassador's wife, the Princesse de Lieven. At all events, the publication of the protocol, according as it did with the preponderance of public opinion in England, greatly strengthened Canning's hand in overruling the objection felt by some of his colleagues to interference with the domestic affairs of Turkey.

[1] Wellington's *Civil Despatches*, iii. 323.

The year 1826 passed in negotiations between the courts of Europe. They resulted in a treaty between Great Britain, Russia, and France, the draft of which reached London in January 1827. Canning was ill at the time; then followed Lord Liverpool's removal from active life and the prolonged Cabinet crisis which came after. It was not until 6th July, when Canning was within a few weeks of his end, that the treaty was signed.

Treaty between Great Britain, France, and Russia, 6th July 1827.

At the instance of Russia and France, a secret article had been added to the draft, in opposition to the strong remonstrance of the Duke of Wellington, who declared that it was "contrary to all the principles on which this country has hitherto proceeded" in dealing with the insurgent subjects of a friendly Power."[1]

The article was a strange one in more respects than that. It provided that in case the Porte should decline to accept within one month the mediation of the three Powers, they would proceed to establish commercial relations with the Greek nation—in short, practically recognise its independence; and further, that if either the Turks or the Greeks refused to observe an armistice, then the Powers must intervene "by preventing all collision between the contending parties . . . without"—here was the strange part of it—"without taking any part in the hostilities between them."

The officer appointed on the part of Great Britain to execute these impracticable instructions was Sir Edward Codrington, commanding the British squadron in the Mediterranean. He was one of Nelson's captains—commanded the *Orion* at Trafalgar—and was now to act as directed by Stratford Canning, British Ambassador to the Porte.[2]

On 30th August, the Greeks having accepted mediation, the Ottoman Government emphatically declined it; wherefore on 10th September the ambassadors of Great Britain,

[1] Wellington's *Civil Despatches*, iii. 610.

[2] Nephew of George Canning; created Viscount Stratford de Redcliffe in 1852, a title to which his talents and services added great lustre. But Peel scarcely expected much of him when he sent him as Ambassador to the Porte in 1841. See his *Letters*, ii. 485.

France, and Russia instructed the admirals of their respective squadrons to prevent the landing of reinforcements or supplies for the Turkish army in the Morea. Readers will wonder how this could be done "without taking part in the hostilities." Codrington wondered also, but did not say much. When the instructions reached him he had been cruising off Navarino—one eye on the Turkish fleet in the harbour, the other looking out for an Egyptian fleet known to be in the offing, bringing reinforcements to Ibrahim Pasha, who was encamped outside Navarino. Presently the fleet hove in sight, ninety-two sail, whereof forty-one were transports. Codrington, having as yet no instructions to the contrary, allowed them to enter the harbour; but on hearing further from Stratford Canning, he headed back a squadron which attempted to leave Navarino on 19th September. Codrington was anxiously looking for the Russian and French squadrons, his own ships being few and in bad repair. In fact, he had to send some of them to refit in Malta, so that on 2nd October, when thirty-two Turkish warships and nineteen transports endeavoured to escape from Navarino, he had only one ship-of-the-line, one frigate, and two brigs to enforce his orders withal. He did it, though; firing a few shots across their bows; thus far carrying out to the letter the paradoxical terms of the treaty.

Ibrahim Pasha, disappointed of co-operation with the fleet, turned his hand to the work ordained by the Sultan. You fussy ambassadors, you would have the war brought to an end, would you? We don't know what concern you have between us and our subjects; but the war shall cease—by the extermination of one of the combatants. And so, "Health and peace to him who followeth the path of rectitude!"[1] Ibrahim divided his reinforced army into three columns, and set them to the ruthless work of massacre and devastation. The French and Russian squadrons having joined Codrington on 13th October, the allied admirals addressed repeated and vigorous remonstrances against these inhuman cruelties, but their endeavours were "treated as mockeries, and the

Turkish atrocities in the Morea, 1827.

[1] The concluding sentence of the manifesto of the Porte (*Annual Register*, 1827, p. 406).

troops of the Pasha continued a species of warfare more destructive than before, putting women and children to the sword, burning their habitations, and tearing up trees by the roots in order to complete the devastation of the country."

Now the allied fleets were not assembled in Greek waters as disinterested spectators; their primary purpose was the blockade of the Peloponnesian coast. But winter was drawing on; storms might arise any day to drive them from their stations. The three admirals therefore decided that, as Ibrahim paid no heed to pacific protests, he must be cowed by a display of force. On 20th October the allied fleet stood in before a light wind and entered the harbour of Navarino, decks cleared for action, Codrington, as senior, in chief command. The Ottoman fleet was moored, broadside on, in a continuous line, bowed in the semblance of the national emblem—the crescent. The allies, formed in two columns, steered straight under the land batteries and between the horns of the crescent. The forts remained silent, but how would the Turkish admiral meet this menace? Signal given, this majestic demilune of broadsides might shatter the advancing column into matchwood by a converging fire. No sound—no sign—as, one after another, Codrington's ships slipped across the placid bay and dropped anchor, each alongside a large Turkish ship. Yard-arm to yard-arm—how was it to end?

Battle of Navarino, 20th Oct. 1827.

Misliking some symptoms in the Turkish fire-ships, the captain of the *Dartmouth* sent a boat to demand explanation. It came in the shape of a volley of musketry, killing Lieutenant Fitzroy and several seamen. Fire was returned to cover the retreat of the survivors. Next, one of the Egyptian ships opened with cannon: prompt response, of course, and the battle of Navarino had begun. During four flaming hours the sea-powers roared out their rage; then—silence! "Out of a fleet composed of sixty men-of-war, there remained only one frigate and fifteen smaller vessels in a state ever to be again put to sea."[1] The allies

[1] Codrington's general order (*Life*, ii. 91). The British lost 16 officers and 54 seamen and marines killed, 28 officers and 161 seamen and marines wounded—total casualties, 259. In the French squadron were 43 killed and 144 wounded. Russian loss not stated.

had not lost a ship, but Turkey had ceased to be a naval power, and the independence of Greece was assured.

Had Canning lived to see that day!

Canning's last "crowded hour of glorious life" stands in striking contrast to the close of his latest chief's long career. Liverpool outlived his successor for a few months, but who can envy that sound and dignified statesman his end?—a hopeless paralytic, conscious of passing events and their urgency, yet powerless to take part in them. Lord Liverpool had held public office for the unexampled period of thirty-four years—continuously, save for the brief break of the "Talents" administration—from 1793 to 1827. He is one of those statesmen whose services have been damned by the faint praise of writers imagining that government could have been conducted in the first quarter of the nineteenth century upon the same progressive lines that were both feasible and desirable in the last quarter. "Not an important man," says one, "but one who filled an important position."[1] Enough, one should say, that he *did* fill it for fifteen crucial years to earn for him more generous recognition. To complain that Liverpool did not initiate and carry through reforms which have proved practicable and beneficial in a later day, is to show as much insight into circumstance as if one were to sneer at our grandsires for travelling in stage-coaches instead of railway saloons. They forget, these retrospective sages, that "to everything there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven." Liverpool might have written his name larger in our annals had he launched into constitutional experiments, but then where had been the suave forbearance—the tactful control—that held men of such opposite natures as Eldon and Canning harnessed for a common purpose.

Liverpool's puissance in council became apparent directly he was laid low. Not one of his colleagues might aspire to fill his place, or—so aspiring—succeed. The cabinet must now pronounce itself Catholic or anti-Catholic. Hitherto, for many years, emancipation had been treated, by overt agreement between King and cabinet, as an open question, whereon ministers were free not only to hold, but to ex-

[1] Sir G. C. Lewis in *Administrations of Great Britain*, p. 433.

press in Parliament, such views as they entertained. Not a heroic bargain, perhaps, which restrained leaders from leading on what was becoming the most pressing question of the day, but one that had succeeded far better than many a more showy arrangement.

In 1821 Liverpool induced the House of Lords to throw out the Catholic Relief Bill which his colleague Castlereagh had carried to a majority in the Commons. Canning, not less earnest than Castlereagh in his advocacy of emancipation, yet realised, as present-day critics do *not*, how strong was anti-Catholic feeling in the constituencies, and had declared sagaciously that the question "must win, not force, its way." At the beginning of 1827 it had so far won its way that it may be doubted whether Liverpool could have held his cabinet together much longer upon a basis of neutrality.

The first Cabinet crisis of 1827.

Now that Liverpool was gone, it did not seem possible that the Tories could reconcile their differences so far as to supply the King with a ministry. Four things stood out clearly from the first: (*a*) that as the Tories had large majorities in both Houses of Parliament, no Whigs need apply; (*b*) that the Tories would not serve under Canning as Prime Minister; (*c*) that Canning would not serve in any administration except as Prime Minister; and (*d*) that no Tory administration could stand without Canning. This *a*, *b*, *c*, *d* seemed to spell deadlock; long and intricate were the endeavours to fit the wards; prudent persons, having their own share of perplexities in life, will not care to waste time in unravelling those of the past.

The essential points to note are as follows. The King had forgotten his griefs against Canning. Ever since the spring of 1825,[1] the brilliant and witty Foreign Secretary had been winning a hold over his Majesty's impulsive nature, and the influence of the Duke of Wellington had been waning proportionately.[2] On 28th March 1827

[1] See Canning's memorandum of his conversation with the King, 28th March 1827. (Stapleton's *George Canning and his Times*, p. 583.)

[2] See Canning's memorandum of a conversation with Sir W. Knighton. (Ibid., pp. 437–444.)

Canning had a long interview with the King, in the course of which he plainly informed his Majesty that "the substantive power of First Minister he must have and, what is more, must be known to have," or he must crave leave to retire. The curious outcome of this interview was a minute drawn up by Canning for the cabinet, conveying the King's desire that ministers should retain their offices with "some peer" at their head of the same principles as Lord Liverpool.[1] This minute was not presented to the Cabinet, though it may be assumed that its purport was not kept very secret. It was natural that Wellington should be regarded, and regard himself, as fulfilling the condition of "some peer of the same principles as Lord Liverpool," and so, on 9th April, Peel waited upon Canning, by the King's command, to propose the duke as First Minister. Canning, of course, declared his intention to resign if any such arrangement was made, and next day he received the King's commands to submit plans for a reconstructed administration. He wrote at once to Wellington to say "how essentially the accomplishment must depend upon your Grace's continuance as a member of the Cabinet."[2]

Now, nobody expected the duke to take office under Canning. He disapproved of a good deal that Canning had done already, and he deeply distrusted what he might do in the future. Pity he did not simply write declining to take office under him! Instead of that, he entered into a wordy correspondence, misunderstanding, or, as one is bound to think, affecting to misunderstand, Canning's singularly explicit letters. Wellington wrote to say that before he could consent to continue in the cabinet he

[1] Ibid., p. 586.

[2] "There is something else, though I protest I know not what, at the bottom of the Duke of Wellington's temper. His extraordinary fretfulness . . . his repeated reference and those of his *alentours* to the approach of critical times, and other language which I know both he and the Chancellor have held very lately about the state of the Government, satisfy me that there is a looking forward to some convulsion in the Government, not wholly unmixed, perhaps, with some intention of bringing it on." (Canning to Liverpool, October 1826.) "I took great pains to persuade the King [to accept Canning in the Cabinet], but I did not know Canning then" (Wellington to Lady Salisbury, noted in her MS. journal).

must know who was to be at the head of it. Myself, of course, replied Canning; does not the King usually entrust the formation of an administration to the individual whom it is his Majesty's gracious intention to place at the head of it? H'm! growled the Duke—beg to be excused—understood "from yourself" that you had another arrangement in contemplation—"some peer professing the same principles as Lord Liverpool"—Mr. Robinson, for instance, to be created a peer for the purpose. Six others of the old cabinet took their stand with the duke—Eldon, Bathurst, Melville, Westmorland, Peel, and Bexley.[1]

One should say that was enough. Not so the Iron Duke. He was sore and angry. For many years he had sacrificed his own convictions upon the Catholic question in deference to the King's repugnance to it; in 1822, with the utmost difficulty and pains, he had persuaded the King to accept Canning as "the last calamity" ("my reliance is on you, my friend: be watchful!"[2]); and now, behold Canning sailing to the front with the Catholic flag at the fore and the King's benison on him!

Wellington was not only Master General of the Ordnance—a political office—but since the Duke of York's death in the previous year he had been Commander-in-Chief of the Army; an office which, as none knew so well as he, it was essential should not be political. At the beginning of the Peninsular war, and often afterwards, he had vehemently denounced party patronage and politics as the very bane of army administration; yet now, in pursuance of his feud with Canning, he threw up the office of Commander-in-Chief, vowing that there were terms of "taunt and rebuke"[3] in the Minister's letters, wherein the bewildered reader at this day can detect nothing but business-like, if frigid, courtesy.[4]

Wellington throws up the office of Commander-in-Chief, April 1827.

It was perhaps the only occasion since early Indian days when Wellington fell short of greatness. His best

[1] Lord Bexley afterwards withdrew his resignation.
[2] King George to the Duke, 13th Sept. 1822.
[3] Wellington's *Civil Despatches*, iv. 51.
[4] See the Duke's memorandum on leaving office. (Ibid., iii. 639.)

friends were in despair. Lord Palmerston, a Tory at that time and Secretary-at-War (not in the Cabinet), did not resign. "I wish to God," he wrote to Lady Jersey, "Hamilton Place had not been quite so near Apsley House" —blaming Eldon's influence upon the duke. Wellington never was a good speaker, but he never came so near being paltry as in his personal explanation to the House of Lords on 2nd May, when he complained of his treatment by "the corrupt press in the pay of the Government." Oh, your Grace! let Canning remain, as he always has been, the spoiled child of the journalists; but if the press is really hired by the Government, why were you a party to that kind of corruption before you left the Government three weeks ago?

Enough! it is the single passage in Wellington's starry course whereon his countrymen cannot afford to dwell.

Canning went forward in the construction of his cabinet, shorn of all anti-Catholic support. He turned for support to the Whigs, Lord Lansdowne taking office without a portfolio. Brougham would have been Attorney-General, at least, but the King drew the line there. "My crimes of 1820," wrote Brougham to his crony, Creevey, "which I prize as my glory, are on my head," but "my only principle is—Lock the door on Eldon & Co., and this can only be done by joining C[anning]."[1] Lord Grey held aloof, distrustful of Canning, and Grey's group got the title of "Malignants." "Tell Lord Grey from me," said the Duke of Wellington to Creevey, "that so long as he keeps his present position, unconnected with either party, he has a power in the country that no other individual ever had before him."[2] Mischievous advice, for the duke was still in his mood, and could not rise to welcome the opportunity for a permanent coalition. Alas! his was to be the hand that dealt the hardest blow on the new administration.

Canning's administration, April–Aug. 1827.

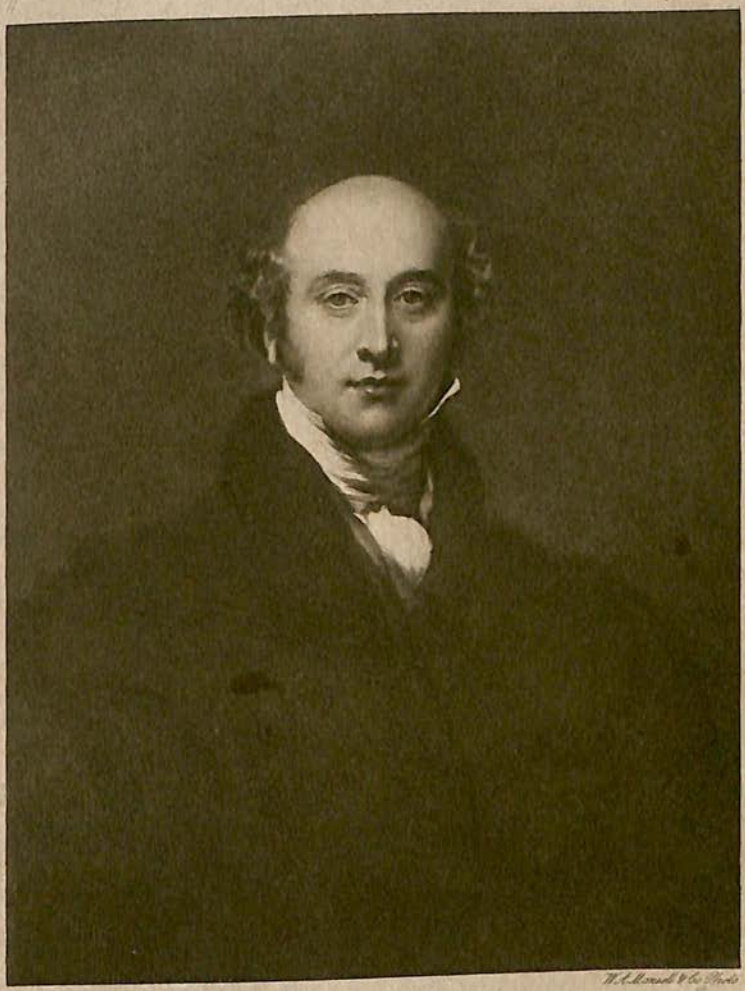
Power had come to Canning at last—that power so ardently desired, so honourably achieved, we will say, despite current accusation—but its term was to be tragi-

[1] *Creevey Papers*, ii. 114, 115. [2] Ibid., 121.

cally short. He was still in what should have been the vigour of age, being only fifty-seven; but all through these trying months he had been sorely ailing. He had never recovered from a severe chill which struck him at the Duke of York's funeral in the previous year. He told Croker after Parliament rose in July that "he had not had one day's health since the beginning of the year." He was well supported in the House of Commons, where Tierney and Brougham more than balanced the Tory dissentients; but in the Lords, Grey's "malignancy" made the situation critical.

However, only one bit of heavy work awaited disposal in Parliament, the Corn Bill, prepared by the old cabinet, and not likely to endanger the new. The Act of 1815 had allowed the importation of wheat whenever the current price should be 80s. a quarter; the Act of 1822 lowered the limit to 70s.; this one brought it down to 60s., a price at which the country party declared wheat could not be grown at a profit. While the Bill was in the committee stage before the House of Commons, Wellington wrote to Huskisson, who had charge of it, suggesting as an amendment that corn should not be taken out of bond until the price had reached 70s. Impossible, replied Huskisson; but personally he would have no objection to fixing the limit at 66s., although he did not believe that the House of Commons would consent to that. When the Bill reached the Lords, Wellington moved an amendment to carry out what Huskisson had said he would not object to. Up rose Lord Goderich [1] and declared that the Government must regard such amendment, if carried, as fatal to the Bill; whereupon the Duke pulled Huskisson's letter from his pocket and read it to the House. In the confusion that followed four minor members of the Government voted for the amendment—the exact number by which it was carried on a division—and the Bill was lost. Intentionally or not, the duke had taken his revenge on Canning, who retaliated in the House of Commons by declaring that "he could conceive no species of faction more inexcusable, more blameable, or more wicked than that which would make a subject touch-

[1] Mr. Robinson had been raised to the peerage under this title.



George Canning

After the painting by Sir Thomas Lawrence

LONDON: EDWARD ARNOLD 1909

ing the vital interests, and involving the prosperity of the whole community, a ground for exciting party feelings of exasperating party animosities."

After the prorogation Canning retired to the Duke of Devonshire's house at Chiswick, to follow the lamentable regimen then in vogue with fashionable physicians—high living and violent medicines.[1] On 20th July he reminded the King that, although the Duke of Wellington had explained in Parliament his own side of the quarrel—"Mr. Canning has studiously forborne hitherto from those public explanations which he feels to be due to himself. . . . Such forbearance, however, must have its limits." Those limits were never reached. On 8th August George Canning drew his last breath, in the same house—some say in the very same room—where Charles Fox had expired twenty years before.

Death of Canning, 8th Aug. 1827.

It is not likely that, had Canning lived to make his threatened explanation, the world would be in a better position to pass judgment upon his controversy with the High Tories. He had never won their confidence; rather they distrusted him for what he might be going to do than resented what he had already done. Plainly, he was no leader for them.[2] But when the parting came, they found offence where solid cause there was none, and Canning must be acquitted of all responsibility for the pitiful wrangles which ensued. His foibles have been amply avenged posthumously. By the decree of an unkindly fate, the individual who possessed the amplest materials for his biography was one of distressing literary capacity. Faithful, conscientious, diligent—Augustus Granville Stapleton was devoid of those other qualities which are essential to the *vates sacer*. Canning was survived by many enemies; the most relentless of them

[1] "Four months' quacking and indulgences" (*Croker Papers*, i. 381).

[2] Sir Walter Scott, though no parliament man, was a shrewd observer of passing events, and was kept well informed by his friends in London. Writing on 10th May 1827, he said: "I, for one, do not believe that it was the question of Emancipation, or any public question, which carried them [Wellington, Eldon, &c.] out. I believe the predominant motive in the bosom of every one of them was personal hostility to Canning; and that with more prudence, less arbitrary manners, and more attention to the feelings of his colleagues, he would have stepped *nem. con.* into the situation of Prime Minister, to which his eloquence and talent naturally point him out."

all cannot but have winced at the mishap which committed the narrative of the wittiest and most eloquent of England's Ministers to the most wooden of her writers.

Canning's services to the State can scarcely be too highly rated—they have proved as enduring as they were brilliant. England has never had a more vigorous nor a more successful Foreign Minister. But too much has been claimed for him as the author of a new policy. Canning's foreign policy was based on the lines laid down by Pitt and followed by Castlereagh, expanding and developing in proportion as the tremors of revolution were stilled and the menacing clouds of anarchy rolled away.

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CHAPTER XIII

The Goderich administration—The Wellington administration—Disabilities of Dissenters—Defeat of Government on the Test Acts—The Roman Catholic claims revived—The question of the corrupt boroughs—Resignation of Huskisson and the Canningites—The Catholic Association—The Clare election—Wellington and Peel undertake Catholic emancipation—Difficulty with the King—The Duke of Wellington's duel with Lord Winchilsea—The Emancipation Bill becomes law—The liberation of Greece.

CANNING was no more, and with Canning was dissolved the only bond holding his cabinet together—a coalition without fusion. The Tory Opposition was weakened simultaneously, for, seven days after Canning's death, the Duke of Wellington had accepted the King's invitation to his "dear friend" to resume command of the army, thereby debarring himself from active operations against the Government. The King had laid his commands upon Lord Goderich, Secretary for War and the Colonies, who, as Mr. Robinson, had been a successful Chancellor of the Exchequer since 1823. Tierney, leader of the Whig Opposition in the Commons, a man of the defunct "Mountain," was brought into the cabinet as Master of the Mint; and, to balance this formidable recruit, Goderich desired to have Lord Palmerston, a Canningite Tory, as Chancellor of the Exchequer—offered him that post, indeed—but the King would none of him. His Majesty wanted a more pliant Minister, one who would not grudge the lavish expenditure then in course of application to the royal palaces (the new "Palace of Pimlico," on the site of Buckingham House, had just been roofed in). John Charles Herries, Secretary to the Treasury, was "the fittest man in England for the office," quoth King George, and Herries it had to be, let the Whigs gnash their teeth as they would. Lord Lansdowne marked his sense of displeasure by resigning; but recanted, on condition that it should be known that he did so at his

The Goderich administration, Aug. 1827–Jan. 1828.

Majesty's special request. So matters wore on till after the holidays; with the autumn Cabinets, poor Goderich began to be sensible of his limitations. A man of excellent business capacity, most useful in subordinate office, never was there more forlorn failure as leader. His colleagues could not agree about the Navarino affair: was Codrington to be blamed or praised? The King would not wait till they had made up their minds—settle it as you please, gentlemen, my opinion was formed from the first—and bestowed honours in the fleet without consulting his Ministers.

Next came a wrangle over the Finance Committee, to appoint which the Government stood pledged by their late chief—a committee to inquire into the national expenditure. Goderich nominated Lord Althorp as chairman; Herries immediately declared he would resign unless the appointment were cancelled—Huskisson, that he would resign unless it were confirmed. Must strengthen my cabinet, thought Goderich, and besought the King to give him the Lords Wellesley and Holland. No, said the King, and it was Goderich's turn to tender his resignation. Yes, said the King, and sent for Lord Harrowby. Ribbon of the Garter for you, my lord, if you will form me a Government.[1] Harrowby declined the task: too old, your Majesty, for one thing; no fancy to meddle with such a coil, for another; so back came "Goody" Goderich—face to face again with injured Herries and imperious Huskisson, both inflexible, deaf to all appeals. Off went Goderich to Windsor, whimpering to the King about these naughty boys. "Go home and take care of yourself, my lord," said King George, who knew—none better—when he had a man to deal with; "and see, take my pocket-handkerchief!"[2]

The Wellington administration, Jan. 1828–Nov. 1830.

Exit Goderich and enter Lord Lyndhurst, who advised his Majesty to send for Wellington. The duke, arriving at Windsor, found his sovereign ill in bed—"that divinity doth hedge a king" veiled under a dirty silk jacket and a turban nightcap.[3] "Arthur!" cried his Majesty, in high

[1] Lord Eldon to Lady F. J. Bankes (Twiss, ii. 194).
[2] *Colchester*, iii. 540; *Palmerston*, i. 212; *Greville Memoirs*, i. 120.
[3] Raikes's Journal, 1843.

glee, "the Cabinet is defunct!" and bade him form a new one.

Now Wellington, contrary to what has been commonly bruited, had no desire for the first place in the Government. Into his quarrel with Canning temper and personal feelings had entered very largely—personal ambition not at all. He told the King he must take counsel with Peel, and Peel he found as little disposed for the venture as he was himself. Unlike Goderich, the duke understood his limitations: a situation, this, he told the Prince of Orange, "for the performance of the duties of which I am not qualified, and they are very disagreeable to me."[1] As for Peel, he obeyed, "though not without great reluctance, the summons thus received. I had no desire whatever to resume office, and I foresaw great difficulty in the conduct of public affairs, on account of the state of parties, and the position of public men in reference to the state of Ireland and the Catholic question."[2] Never was office forced upon two more reluctant individuals; it is useful to read their correspondence at the time, as a corrective of the too general impression that ambition and self-seeking are the dominant motives among our public men.

Great was the jubilation among the High Tories. The duke would send the Canningites packing, and the world would roll once more upon its right axis. But the duke had a soldier's eye to the balance of forces. "Those who are for forming an exclusive Ministry expect that I am to go into the House of Commons with *half a party*, to fight *a party and a half*."[3] The Whigs naturally declined to serve under Wellington, but in his cabinet of fourteen there were five, perhaps six, undoubted Canningites. The Tory Herries was transferred to the Mint (no promotion!), and the seals of the Exchequer were committed to Henry Goulburn. But what marked the comprehensive character of the Ministry most emphatically was the exclusion of Lord Eldon. The Duke of Newcastle expressed the disgust of the High Tories by writing to Wellington that "any ministry which excludes Lord Eldon and includes Mr. Huskisson cannot gain my

[1] *Civil Despatches*, iv. 335. [2] *Peel Letters*, ii. 28.
[3] *Croker Papers*, i. 404.

confidence."[1] On the other hand, Canning's widow wrote to Huskisson, reproaching him for "joining her husband's murderers."[2] Nevertheless, the common sense of the nation ratified the new—the only possible—order of things.

The most obvious difficulty before the Government was the old question of Roman Catholic emancipation; but suddenly there loomed up another, unforeseen and imminent. A certain London banker, Smith by name, member for Norwich, lay, as a Dissenter, under the disabilities of the Test and Corporation Acts, which required that all persons, before entering upon any office, civil or military, should receive the sacrament of the Lord's Supper according to the rites of the Church of England; thus technically excluding all Dissenters from the public service. Practically, they entered such service as freely as any orthodox churchmen, receiving indemnity under an annual Act, wittily described by Lord John Russell as an Act "passed yearly to forgive good men for doing good service to their country." No complaint had been heard from Dissenters, who, indeed, rather discouraged proposals to repeal the disabling Acts, lest the removal of the heavier disabilities of Roman Catholics should be facilitated thereby. But Mr. Smith was of another mind. Burning under the indignity of being unable to sit "as a magistrate in any corporation without violating his conscience," he had made his protest when the annual Indemnity Bill was before the House in 1827. Lord John Russell supported him, pledging himself to a crusade against tests. He redeemed the pledge the following year by moving a resolution on behalf of three millions of Nonconformists for the repeal of the Test and Corporation Acts. The debate revealed how greatly the feelings of public men had altered in regard to matters ecclesiastical. Were the Thirty-nine Articles really an indefeasible part of the British Constitution? The contrary case had only to be clearly stated to prove irresistible. Nevertheless, the Government did resist it, holding that the outworks

Disabilities of Dissenters, 1827–28.

Defeat of the Government on the Test Acts, 28th Feb. 1828.

[1] *Apsley House MSS.*
[2] Lord Eldon to Lady F. J. Bankes (Twiss, ii. 195).

must be defended if the citadel was not to fall. The official view was that liberty of conscience and worship were incompatible with the maintenance of the Established Church. The House of Commons declined to take that view. Lord John Russell carried his motion by a majority of forty-four against Ministers.

At the present day, such a defeat in the House of Commons would involve resignation; not so in the unreformed Parliament—a reverse in the Commons could be wiped out in the Lords. In the ordinary course, Lord John's repeal bill would have been sent to the upper chamber for immolation. Peel, however, stout churchman as he was, took account of the new spirit in affairs, and dreaded a conflict between the two Houses upon a religious question. At his instance, the spiritual lords agreed to accept the Bill, amended so as to substitute for the ancient test a simple declaration to be made by every Dissenter who should accept office under the Crown or become a member of a corporation, binding him "never to exert any power or influence to injure or subvert the Protestant Church by law established." With this amendment the Bill passed the House of Commons without further opposition, and the House of Lords received it favourably. Nevertheless, their lordships, while consenting to relieve Dissenters, unconsciously imposed a new disability upon Jews, for they accepted an amendment by the Bishop of Llandaff which required the declaration to be made "upon the true faith of a Christian."

Thus, before the Duke of Wellington, pillar of Toryism, had been two months in office, was taken the first decisive step in the march of Reform, the first concession granted to the will of the people, not wholly inarticulate, even under the constitution of 1688—a step and a concession of evil augury in the eyes of the High Tories, precursors, they believed, of the inevitable dissolution of Church and State.[1]

[1] "I have fought like a lion, but my talons have been cut off. . . . The Bill is, in my poor judgment, as bad, as mischievous, and as revolutionary as the most captious Dissenter would wish it to be." (Lord Eldon to Lady F. J. Bankes: Twiss, ii. 207, 208.)

This victory for the cause of religious liberty stimulated the advocates of Catholic emancipation into fresh activity. The King had stipulated that the question should continue to be treated as an open one by the new Cabinet.[1] It was raised on 8th May upon a resolution moved by Sir Francis Burdett, and carried, after three nights' debate, in favour of the Roman Catholics by 272 to 266, although in the preceding session it had been lost by four votes, despite Canning's eloquent appeal to the House. The six members of the Cabinet in the House of Commons were equally divided—three on each side—but Peel, who spoke and voted against relief, felt so acutely the humiliation of being left, as leader of the House, in a minority on "the most important of domestic questions," that he made up his mind to resign.[2] Howbeit, events were running a course that brought him to a different decision.

The Roman Catholic claims, May 1828.

There were members of that Cabinet more Canningite than Canning himself. Canning had always opposed a firm front to parliamentary reform: witness his action no later than 1827, when, as Prime Minister, he had resisted the proposal to disfranchise the flagrantly corrupt boroughs of Penryn and East Retford.[3] These were paltry villages of about 2000 inhabitants each, returning, between them, four members to Parliament. It was proposed to deprive them of the franchise and confer it upon Manchester and Liverpool, each with a population of over 100,000. Canning opposed the Bills, and was beaten by 124 votes to 69, but the Penryn Bill having been thrown out in the Lords, the Retford Bill was dropped. Both Bills reappeared on the paper in the session of 1828. The Cabinet was divided—the Tories desiring to throw the boroughs into the neighbouring hundreds; the Canningites, to disfran-

The question of the corrupt boroughs, 1828.

[1] Wellington's *Civil Despatches*, iv. 184, 193.

[2] *Peel Letters*, ii. 46.

[3] In East Retford it was the established custom for the two successful candidates to pay twenty guineas for every vote; so that an elector lucky enough to vote for both received forty guineas. In Penryn, besides money payments, the public-houses were thrown open to the electors for weeks at the expense of the candidates.

chise them for good and all and give their franchise to Birmingham and Manchester. Finally, Peel induced his colleagues to agree on a compromise—the Penryn franchise to be given to Manchester, Retford to be merged in the adjacent hundred. But this arrangement was wrecked in the Lords by an amendment remitting the sentence upon Penryn, which it was decided should retain the franchise and be thrown into the hundred, let Manchester say what it might. When the Bill came back to the Commons, Peel supported the Lords' amendment, and carried it by a majority of eighteen; but Huskisson, Palmerston, and Lamb (my Lord Melbourne of a later day)—all Ministers—went into the lobby against their leader. Huskisson, understanding that his vote had given offence, wrote at two in the morning to the Duke of Wellington, saying that, after voting as he had felt compelled to do, he would "lose no time in affording him an opportunity of placing his office in other hands." The duke replied on the same day, expressing "great concern," and he had laid Huskisson's letter before the King. Back came a letter from Huskisson—didn't mean that at all—"my object in writing was, not to express any intentions of my own, but to relieve *you* of any delicacy you might feel," &c. Next came the Lords Dudley and Palmerston to assure their chief that here was misunderstanding; Huskisson never meant to resign. What in all the world *did* he mean, then? asked Wellington.[1]

All might have been smoothed over easily enough, one sees, but in truth the duke was getting tired of these thin-skinned Canningites. He had been trained in a profession where insubordination is reckoned one of the seven deadly sins; he regarded Huskisson's vote as an insubordinate act, and—in short, his temper was ruffled. If Huskisson wished to remain in the Government, let him say so. The Duke was not disposed to beg him to withdraw his resignation,

Resignation of the Canningites, May 1828.

[1] "I told Dudley and Palmerston that I had no objection—nay, that I wished—that they and Huskisson could get out of the scrape, but that I begged on my own part to decline taking a roll in the mud with them" (*Croker Papers*, i. 423).

and Huskisson was too proud to make the first advance. So they parted company, these two—to meet only once again, on the eve of a more solemn parting.

Huskisson carried away with him the other Canningites —Lord Dudley, Lord Palmerston, C. Grant, and Lamb (the last named being Irish Secretary, not in the Cabinet). Palmerston had been at the War Office for nineteen years as a Tory; henceforward he gravitated towards the Whigs. He was replaced by Sir Henry Hardinge, one of Wellington's old Peninsular officers. Another of them, Sir George Murray, followed Huskisson at the Colonial Office. He had been an admirable Quartermaster-General in the Peninsula, but had never been suspected of any capacity for political administration. Vesey Fitzgerald, known only as a wealthy Irish landlord of agreeable manners and liberal views upon emancipation, was put at the head of the Board of Trade, to watch over interests whereof he was sublimely ignorant; the fourth and most important vacancy in the cabinet, the Foreign Office, was filled by the Earl of Aberdeen.

Here, then, at last was an undiluted Tory administration. The Duke was going, after all, to fight with half a party against a party and a half. The new appointments added no debating power to the Treasury Bench in the House of Commons. People shrugged their shoulders over Fitzgerald's appointment, but nobody expected that when he vacated his seat, on taking office, there would be the slightest difficulty about his re-election. They left out of account a formidable movement that had been in progress for some years in Ireland.

The Catholic Association, 1823–29.

In the year 1823 a number of Roman Catholics in Dublin assembled for the purpose of preparing a petition to Parliament in favour of emancipation. Among them was a certain gentleman who had won considerable distinction at the Bar, by name Daniel O'Connell. Born in 1775, he had led the opposition in Dublin against the Act of Union, and from that time onwards had been one of the most eloquent and indefatigable advocates of the Roman Catholic claims. His reputation had been enhanced among his high-spirited

countrymen by his challenging Peel to a duel in 1815, and had suffered no detriment when he killed Mr. d'Esterre, who challenged him in the same year. Nevertheless, O'Connell was no advocate of violent measures, discountenancing secret societies and sedition, and, on the whole, leading the Roman Catholics to combine in constitutional agitation. This was the man who made the Dublin meeting the foundation of the Catholic Association. The Protestants of Ireland were already enrolled—had been for a generation and more—in the Orange Society, sworn to maintain Protestant ascendency. It was in the truculence and aggression of the Orange lodges that O'Connell found the strongest arguments for a counter-organisation. The priests flocked to his banner; the peasantry and townsfolk joined the Catholic Association in tens of thousands, willingly paying the annual contribution of a shilling, regularly collected by officials appointed in every parish.

But if O'Connell studied moderation in his guidance of the Association, it was not in the Irish nature to observe the same limits. Inflammatory sermons were preached in many chapels; the temper of the people ripened towards rebellion; the symptoms became so threatening that in 1825 the Government passed an Act for the suppression of every society in Ireland formed for the redress of grievances "in Church or State, renewing its meetings for more than fourteen days, and collecting or receiving money." The Catholics evaded the provisions of this measure by the simple expedient of dissolving their Association and reconstituting it as a charitable society, without any overt allusion whatever to emancipation.

No race of men fight more furiously among themselves than the Celts; none so prone as they to faction and feud; yet who so ready to recognise the attributes of a leader when one appears? who so pliant to his will? Hitherto the Irish freeholders had trooped to polls at the bidding of their landlords, who were generally Protestant Tories; more docile, subservient electors were not to be found in the three kingdoms. The vacancy for county Clare, caused by Fitzgerald accepting office under the Crown, gave O'Connell an opportunity, which he was

bold enough to seize, of testing the strength of the Catholic Association. Fitzgerald was a great figure in the west, personally popular and a supporter of the Catholic claims; O'Connell was a stranger there, debarred as a Catholic from sitting in Parliament. Yet when he flung down the gauntlet as a candidate for election the whole constituency seemed at his beck.[1] In those days the polls were kept open for a fortnight, but long before the time was up Fitzgerald retired from a hopeless contest.

The Clare election, July 1828.

The effect was tremendous. O'Connell, as a Catholic, could not take the seat to which he had been elected; but the issue before the Cabinet was emancipation or civil war. What had happened in Clare would happen in every constituency out of Ulster. "No power on earth can arrest its progress," was the warning given to the Government by the Lord-Lieutenant, Lord Anglesey. "There may be civil war. You may put to death thousands. You may suppress it, but it will only be to put off the day of compromise."[2] Even Peel—hitherto affectionately hailed as "Orange Peel" by the Irish Protestants—even Peel saw that "the Clare election would be the turning-point in the Catholic question."[3] He told Wellington that he perceived the time had come for yielding, but that his own public record unfitted him for taking a measure of concession in hand. Had he not given as his only reason for declining to join Canning's administration "the very active and prominent part in opposition to the Catholic claims" that he had taken throughout his career in Parliament?[4] He expressed his intention to resign, but promised hearty support to "a measure of ample concession and relief." Wellington, on the eve of starting for Cheltenham to drink the waters, said he would return in September to discuss the matter with Peel and Lyndhurst. But his mind was made up already. They greatly err who attribute Wellington's action

[1] The Irish franchise was much wider than that of Great Britain. The Act of 1793 had enfranchised the 40s. freeholder, which admitted the bulk of the Irish peasant farmers.

[2] Wellington's *Civil Despatches*, iv. 522.

[3] *Peel Letters*, ii. 47.

[4] Wellington's *Civil Despatches*, iv. 522.

at this crisis to Peel's influence. Peel had opposed concession, not only on political grounds, but by conviction as a Protestant churchman. Wellington, neither stimulated by religious conviction nor biassed by sectarian preference, had opposed it solely in order to avert a conflict with the Sovereign, who in 1823 had declared that his sentiments upon Catholic Emancipation were those of "his revered and excellent father; from these sentiments the King never can and never will depart."[1] Privately, Wellington had been in favour of emancipation ever since 1793, when, as a young member of the Irish Parliament, he had supported Pitt's Bill enfranchising the Roman Catholics. In 1825, encouraged by certain concessions which King George had been induced to grant to his Roman Catholic subjects in Hanover, he had drawn up a remarkable paper, which most writers on that period have passed over in unaccountable silence. In this paper was set forth a detailed scheme of relief to the Irish Catholics, with provision for concurrent endowment. Of the objection that it was inconsistent for a Tory Cabinet to undertake such a scheme, the Duke made very light:—

"I go further, and say that the King's present servants are the men who ought to consider of it, and to decide it as far as circumstances will enable them. . . . If this be true, it is surely more manly and consistent with our duty to our Sovereign and the public so to conduct ourselves as to be able to render most service in the particular crisis of time, than to be looking about to see what imputations can be brought against us of supposed attachment to office. . . . I really cannot think we ought to quit the King in such a crisis."[2]

And now once more in 1828, before going to Cheltenham, Wellington drew up for the King a memorandum of the measures of concession which he recommended for Ireland. The King was ill, and did not receive this document till 16th November, long after the Duke, with Peel and Lyndhurst, had been arranging the order of retreat from a position that was no longer tenable.

[1] *Peel Letters*, i. 349.

[2] Wellington's *Civil Despatches*, ii. 595. This lengthy document was prepared for the Cabinet, but it is not known whether it was ever submitted to it.

One incident at this period has been repeatedly cited as an example of Wellington's autocratic treatment of his colleagues. It has even been condemned as an act of insincerity, intended to hoodwink the Protestant public. The Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland, the Marquess of Anglesey, had finished two-and-twenty years of a soldier's life by commanding, as Lord Uxbridge, the British cavalry at Waterloo under the Duke of Wellington. The round shot which tore off his leg passed first over the withers of Copenhagen, the famous chestnut which the duke was riding on that day.[1] The personal bond between the duke and the marquess was no ordinary one; privately, the duke agreed with Anglesey upon the Roman Catholic question, and had resolved to force a measure of emancipation upon his unwilling Sovereign. Anglesey, however, was indiscreet in giving open encouragement to a movement which was opposed to the avowed policy of the Government whereof he was a member; he let the Catholics understand "that his hands were tied up by the Ministers, otherwise he would do everything that was wished."[2] The Duke, and still more so Peel,[3] were greatly dissatisfied with his conduct; yet when the King sent for Wellington on 5th August and desired him to remove Anglesey from his office, Wellington succeeded with difficulty in dissuading him from pressing this, and Anglesey continued Lord-Lieutenant till the month of December. By that time, however, relations between him and the Government had become so strained that Wellington laid the matter before the Cabinet, who were unanimous that there was nothing for it but to recall Lord Anglesey.[4] The Duke of Northumberland was appointed in his place, an anti-Catholic, and therefore not known to entertain the enlightened views which he imparted to Wellington upon accepting office. This is, in brief, the true story of Wellington's action in recalling Lord Anglesey, which has been misrepresented as being a deliberate "blind," intended to lull the suspicions of anti-Catholics.

Removal of Lord Anglesey from Ireland, 1828.

[1] "By God! I've lost my leg," cried Uxbridge. "Have you, by God!" was the Duke's rejoinder. (*Greville*, 2nd Series, i. 135.)

[2] Wellington's *Civil Despatches*, iv. 666.

[3] Ibid., 620.

[4] *Croker Papers*, ii. 3.

Patiently, persistently, through these winter months Wellington continued to urge upon the King the necessity for relief. The King entrenched himself behind the bishops; the bishops bellowed anathema upon concession; until at last, Peel, "impressed with the strongest feelings of attachment to the Duke of Wellington, and of admiration for his upright conduct and intentions," gave up all idea of resigning, and made free and loyal offer of that co-operation which the duke, out of consideration for his colleague's feelings, had declined to press for.[1] He undertook to conduct a Relief Bill through the House of Commons—a Bill modified in some important respects to meet his views. Notably, Wellington's proposal to grant a subsidy of £300,000 a year to the Irish priesthood was abandoned, for Peel could not bring himself to approve of a dual Church Establishment in Ireland. Gradually the King's resolution yielded to Wellington's inflexible will.

"He treats the King as an equal," wrote Charles Greville, no blind panegyrist of Wellington, "and the King stands entirely in awe of him. . . . Whatever he may be, he is at this moment one of the most powerful ministers the country has ever seen. The greatest ministers have been compelled to bow to the King, or the aristocracy, or the Commons; but he commands them all." On 1st February 1829 the King signed the draft of the Speech from the Throne. "His Majesty recommends . . . that you should review the laws which impose disabilities on his Majesty's Roman Catholic subjects."

The secret had been kept, and well kept, until the last moment. It burst upon the Tory party like a mine. Betrayal! they cried, and Peel the arch-traitor! By vacating his seat for Oxford University, Peel offered his constituents an opportunity for vengeance, which they seized by electing Sir Robert Inglis in his place by 755 to 609 votes. A seat was provided for Peel in the little rotten borough of Westbury, where he narrowly escaped a second defeat. No Popery! was the cry; the Protestant clergy and people clamouring for a dissolution of Parliament. Wellington

Wellington and Peel undertake Catholic Emancipation, Feb. 1829.

[1] *Peel Letters*, ii. 70.

and his colleagues, well knowing what would be the result of such an appeal to an excited electorate, went steadily forward with their work. The Emancipation Bill was to be preceded by a measure conferring absolute power upon the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland to suppress such associations as he might deem dangerous to law and order. This, of course, was aimed at the Catholic Association, and was very unpalatable to the Opposition; but they accepted it as a temporary evil, the duration of the Act being limited to one year, whereas emancipation would be once and for ever. They even consented to the disfranchisement of the Irish forty-shilling freeholder, which Peel stipulated for as a counterpoise to emancipation. It were well that those who extol Peel's magnanimity at the expense of Wellington's should reflect upon the passage in Peel's four hours' speech on 5th March in which he justified this precaution. He was as yet incapable of reconciling political liberty with constitutional safety.

"We must look for real security in the regulation of the elective franchise in Ireland. It is in vain to deny or to conceal the truth in respect to that franchise. It was, until a late period, the instrument through which the landed aristocracy . . . maintained their local influence, through which property had its legitimate weight in the national representation. The landlord has been disarmed by the priest. . . . That weapon which he [the Protestant proprietor] has forged with so much care, and which he has heretofore wielded with so much success, has broken short in his hand."[1]

It would be difficult to state the old theory of representation, held alike by Whig and Tory, with greater frankness. The Irish electoral qualification was to be raised from £2 to £10, an immense measure of disfranchisement, which Brougham accepted on behalf of the Radicals "as the price—the high price—the all but extravagant price—of this inestimable good."[2]

With the regular Opposition in this spirit, nothing was to be feared from the Tory irreconcilables in Parliament; but, upon the very eve of introducing the Emancipation Bill, ministers were confronted with serious difficulty

[1] *Hansard*, xx. 769.

[2] Ibid., 336.

from another quarter. The Duke of Cumberland hastened to London from the Continent to exert his influence with the King against the new policy of concession. To do this with success, he found that it was necessary to destroy the ascendency which Wellington had regained over his Majesty.

Difficulty with the King, 4th March 1829.

It has been commonly believed that, in opposing the Catholic claims, this prince was acting more out of personal animosity to Wellington than from genuine conviction. Let us not make his record worse than it stands. It is dark enough; but his quarrel with Wellington at this time was the result, not the origin, of his Royal Highness's activity against the Catholics. He had hailed him with delight as Canning's successor—"not so *eloquent* as Mr. Canning, still, believe me, he is in everything else his *superior*."[1] He now taunted the King for truckling to "King Arthur," and plied him with such vehement reproach for consenting to break his coronation oath as reduced his Majesty to a pitiable state of hesitancy. On 4th March, then, Wellington, Lyndhurst, and Peel were summoned to Windsor, where an explanation was demanded of the measure which Peel was to introduce on the morrow. A stormy interview of more than five hours ended by the King declaring that he had been misled and deceived, that the royal assent could never be given to such a measure, and would Mr. Peel inform him of the course he intended to take in the House of Commons in these circumstances? "Simply inform the House," was Peel's reply, "that I regret my inability to proceed with the Bill, having no longer the honour of being your Majesty's minister." Thereupon all three ministers begged leave to resign, the King assenting, and dismissing them with a kiss on each cheek. At a Cabinet dinner that night the question of the new ministry was discussed. "Don't be afraid," said the Duke of Wellington, "before to-morrow morning I shall hear from the King again." A few minutes later he was summoned home to receive a letter from his Majesty,[2] which announced that he had decided to yield to his Cabinet,

[1] Letter to Col. Clive (Wellington's *Civil Despatches*, iv. 262).

[2] *Salisbury MSS.*

but "God knows what pain it costs me to write these words."

Thereafter the Emancipation Bill made speedy progress, carried upon the first reading by 348 votes against 160 Tory irreconcilables. Two members of the Government were in the minority, Sir Charles Wetherell (Attorney-General) and Lord Lowther.

Now Lowther was the son of Lord Lonsdale, who went by the name of the "Cat-o'-nine-tails," because he returned nine members to the House of Commons—eighteen votes on a division—not to be lightly affronted, even by "King Arthur." Wetherell and Lowther, therefore, continued in their offices; but on the second reading, Wetherell used language which could not be overlooked. "If his Majesty chooses to dispense with the obligations of his coronation oath, he may do so. . . . I have no speech to eat up. I have no apostasy disgracefully to explain. I have no paltry subterfuge to resort to. I have not to say that a thing is black one day and white another"; and so on, the violence of his language being only inferior to that of his gestures. "When he speaks," notes Greville, "he unbuttons his braces, and in his vehement action his breeches fall down and his waistcoat runs up"; so that the Speaker was tempted to remark that Wetherell's only lucid interval was between his breeches and waistcoat. In consequence of this speech, the Prime Minister removed the Attorney-General from office. The Emancipation Bill made steady progress through all stages in the House of Commons; but once more the King yielded to the Duke of Cumberland's persistence, and told Wellington that he might force his measure through, but that it would never receive the royal assent. Wellington made blunt reply that this would be a breach of honour, inasmuch as the Opposition had allowed the Coercion Bill to pass only on the understanding that the other was to follow.[1]

Then the Earl of Winchilsea, an irascible Tory, published a letter in the *Standard* newspaper, accusing the Duke of insincerity, and charging him with carrying on "insidious designs" for the introduction of Popery "under the cloak

[1] Wellington's *Civil Despatches*, vi. 294.

of some outward show of zeal for the Protestant religion." The duke promptly called Lord Winchilsea to account; Sir Henry Hardinge waiting upon his lordship to demand an apology; which being refused, a challenge followed on the part of the duke, and a meeting took place in Battersea Fields early on Saturday morning, 21st March. Lord Falmouth acted as second to Lord Winchilsea; Dr. Hume, who had been Wellington's surgeon and constant companion in his European campaigns, had been summoned by Hardinge to attend "an affair of honour between two gentlemen." Judge of his surprise when he recognised the principals!

Wellington's duel with Lord Winchilsea, 20th March 1829.

"Now then, Hardinge," cried the duke, "look sharp and step out the ground. I have no time to waste. D— it! don't stick him up so near the ditch. If I hit him he will tumble in!"[1]

Wellington had no intention of hitting anybody. He fired first—purposely wide—Winchilsea fired in the air, and so the formula of honour was fulfilled. The Duke justified his action, which had been severely criticised, in a long letter to the Duke of Buckingham. He admitted that the duel had "shocked many good men," but he had acted deliberately in accordance with his conviction that it was necessary in the public interest to clear away "the atmosphere of calumny" in which he had been living for some time. The duel was as much a move in the Roman Catholic controversy as any other act of the duke's, undertaken, strange as it may seem, not on private but on public grounds.[2]

The Emancipation Bill was read a third time in the House of Commons on 30th March by 320 votes to 142—majority, 178.

"But how will it be," asked Macaulay of Lord Clarendon, "when it goes to the Lords?"

"Oh, that will be simple enough," replied Clarendon. "The Duke will say, 'My lords! Attention! Right about face! Quick march!' and the thing will be done."

[1] Related by Dr. Hume to the late Admiral Sir G. Seymour. The exact spot is believed to have been in the hollow now filled by the Ladies' Pond.

[2] Buckingham's *George IV.*, ii. 397.

Lord Clarendon did not overrate the discipline of his peers. The second reading was carried in the House of Lords by 217 votes to 112—majority, 105—ten out of twenty-nine bishops supporting it. On 13th April the Bill received the royal assent, and when Parliament reassembled after the Easter Holidays, on 28th April, Roman Catholic peers took the oath and their seats for the first time since the Revolution of 1688.

The Emancipation Bill becomes law, 13th April 1829.

"For the first time," also, exclaims the editor of the *Annual Register*, in a burst of indignation very unusual in the dispassionate columns of that excellent chronicle—"for the first time the Government of a British monarch announced to the British public that, when they set their minds on some great public object or wish to avoid some great public danger, they are not to be listened to, unless they assume the attitude of insurrection and speak the plain and bold language of open menace."

It has been the fashion to contrast the Duke of Wellington's political life unfavourably with his unrivalled military career. As a soldier he has received the unanimous applause of his countrymen; their estimate of him as a statesman has been coloured by party prepossession. Yet in all that this man achieved in arms there is nothing that brings into higher relief his ascendency over other men than this act of State. It may be true that without Peel he could not have triumphed, but we have Peel's own word for it that he only yielded to the contagion of Wellington's "upright conduct and intentions." It was Wellington's force of character and earnestness of purpose that brought Peel to his side at the last—his indomitable courage that broke down the obstacle which had been fatal to Pitt's scheme of emancipation—his Sovereign's veto. But more was required than all that. It was the stern fibres in his nature—what strikes us as the unamiable, or at least the unsympathetic side—that saved him from flinching when his party rose in revolt,[1] and made him seem indifferent to the growls of an angry nation. It is

[1] "The party!" he exclaimed to Lady Salisbury, when, at a later day, she said she apprehended a split; "the party! What is the meaning of a party if they don't follow their leaders? Damn them! Let 'em go!" (*Salisbury MSS.*, 1838.)

statesmanship of the highest order to overrule the popular clamour of the moment—to steer the ship through the fierce tides of the straits into the blue water beyond.

For the nation was very angry—angry at the policy—angry because Wellington would not give them an opportunity of showing its anger at the polls. When Wetherell was dismissed from office, no Protestant constituency could be reckoned on to elect a member in favour of emancipation, so the Attorney-Generalship remained vacant.

In his foreign policy, Wellington did not win the applause of his countrymen. During two years of great unrest on the Continent he steered Great Britain clear of war; but his rooted faith in constituted authority, good or bad—his dread of disturbing the balance of power in Europe—his distrust of the growing nationalist spirit—brought him into conflict with the rising force of popular aspiration. We have seen how strongly he disapproved of the treaty of London, which bound Great Britain, France, and Russia together as a kind of special constabulary, armed, but forbidden to use their arms, for the protection of the Greeks in the Morea; and how, after all, arms had to be used with tremendous effect at Navarino. Wellington never contemplated departure from that treaty—"no government more determined than this—no man more determined than I am—to carry that treaty into execution with all the celerity" in our power.[1] But his Cabinet were divided in opinion upon Codrington's action at Navarino. The Canningites applauded—the Tories condemned it. The battle was referred to in the King's speech as an "untoward event"; a term hotly challenged in Parliament by Lord Holland, Brougham, and others as a stigma on the gallant admiral. Dudley remained at the Foreign Office where he had been installed by Canning—the same Dudley who had formerly advocated the expulsion of "those hateful barbarians, the Turks," from Europe. The Porte was claiming compensation from the allies for the destruction of its fleet; when this was refused as a matter of course, it denounced the treaty of Ackermann (1826), ex-

The independence of Greece, 14th Sept. 1829.

[1] Letter to the Prince of Orange (Wellington's *Civil Despatches*, iv. 336).

pelled Russian subjects from Turkey, and forced Russia into war.

France now urged that the allied fleet should blockade Constantinople; but Wellington, though he stood by the treaty of London, and would prevent reinforcements to the Turkish army in the Morea, declined to take a course that must destroy the Turkish empire in Europe. He had no desire to see Russia a Mediterranean Power.

Meanwhile Codrington, who had delighted the Canningites by his vigorous action at Navarino, incurred their intense displeasure by sailing off to Malta for repairs; thereby allowing another Turco-Egyptian fleet to enter Navarino and deport between 5000 and 6000 Greeks to Egypt, where they were sold as slaves. The Canningites demanded Codrington's recall; the Tories made no objection. An order was made out for the recall of the unfortunate admiral, who, as readers will agree, was the last to be held responsible for the confusion. Howbeit, the cabinet crisis occurring in May, that order remained unsigned till June; by which time Codrington had so effectively renewed the blockade that Mehemet Ali, sick of the war, undertook to withdraw Ibraham Pasha's army from the Morea altogether. There still remained some Turkish garrisons, which the French Government proposed should be driven out by an allied expedition. Wellington declined to send any troops, but undertook to co-operate by sea; and the Morea was cleared of the Turks by 18,000 French under General Maison.

After the Canningite secession in May 1828, Lord Aberdeen succeeded Dudley at the Foreign Office. Stratford Canning had been British Ambassador with the Porte since 1825, and entertained views about the independence of Greece which his new chief could not approve. He was therefore recalled in June 1829, and Aberdeen's brother, the Hon. Robert Gordon, was sent out in his place. The Russian army under Diebitsch, having encountered in the preceding year a stubborn resistance in advancing through the Danubian provinces, captured Varna and Silistria in the summer of 1829, and threatened Constantinople itself. Diebitsch's troops were in the last stage of exhaustion,

weakened by disease and in difficulties about supplies; but their commander maintained a bold front, and Gordon persuaded the Porte to sue for peace. This brought about the treaty of Adrianople, whereby Russia acquired some territory in Asia Minor, including the Black Sea ports of Anapa and Poti, a Russian protectorate was established over Moldavia and Wallachia, the Dardanelles were thrown open to the commerce of all nations, and the Porte accepted the treaty of London and the delimitation of Greece as determined by the allied Powers.

It was only in the settlement of the affairs of Greece that Great Britain's voice was heard, and upon every detail it was ineffectual. Wellington, keeping within the four corners of the treaty of London, was unwilling that the Greeks should be restored to more than the Morea and the adjacent islands; and, even so, the new nation was to be tributary to Turkey and debarred from independent relations with foreign governments. The representatives of Russia and France decided, and rightly decided, that it would be a dangerous mockery to establish a modern Greece which did not include Athens, Thebes, Marathon, Thermopylæ—names indelibly associated with the story of the people and hallowed by their noblest literature. Overruled upon that point, Aberdeen would avert the risk of the new Power becoming too strong by dividing it into two states. No, again, from Russia and France; and Englishmen, most of whom were enthusiastic for Greek independence, had the mortification of seeing it conferred—free and entire—against the wishes and action of their own Government.

CHAPTER XIV

Firstfruits of Catholic Emancipation—Disorder in Ireland—Distress and disorder in Great Britain—Illness and death of George IV.—Accession of William IV.—Revolution in France—Opening of the Manchester Railway—Wellington declares against Reform—Royal visit to the City postponed—Fall of Wellington's Ministry—Lord Grey forms a Cabinet—Coercive measures against rioters—The First Reform Bill—The Second Reform Bill—The Third Reform Bill—The Grey Cabinet resigns—and resumes office—Passage of the Reform Bill.

STRANGELY maladroit was the action of Ministers in refusing to make the Emancipation Act retrospective. Such a concession would have affected one individual only—Daniel O'Connell. To frame the measure so as to oblige him to go through a second election for county Clare seemed a petty retribution upon one who had forced the hand of the Government. To Irishmen the measure came shorn of all semblance of grace, and O'Connell went back to his constituents in the radiance of a martyr.

Firstfruits of Catholic Emancipation, 1829.

It had been one of the many anomalies of the constitution that, although Roman Catholic peers and commoners could not sit in Parliament, there was nothing to prevent them returning members for the boroughs of which they were patrons. Thus, the Duke of Norfolk enjoyed the absolute disposal of several seats, and his first act after being admitted to the House of Lords was to cause Mr. Hunt, one of the members for Horsham, to resign in favour of his son, Lord Surrey, who took the oaths of allegiance and abjuration on 15th May 1829—the first Roman Catholic member of the House of Commons since 1688. O'Connell presented himself at the table to be sworn on the same day; but to him the clerk presented the oath of supremacy in addition to the two others. O'Connell was ready to take the same oaths as Lord Surrey had done, but claimed relief under the Act from taking that of supremacy. The Speaker

ruled, subject to any interpretation which the House might put upon the Act, that any member elected before the passing of the Act, as Mr. O'Connell had been, must conform to the law as it stood at the time of his election. The question was thus referred to the House for decision, O'Connell being heard at the bar in support of his claim. No Attorney-General having been appointed in succession to Sir C. Wetherell, the Solicitor-General opposed O'Connell's claim on behalf of the Government, and it was disallowed on a division by 190 votes to 116. Supposing the letter of the law to be as the Solicitor-General declared, which was open to doubt, here was an occasion, if ever there was one, to be met by an act of indemnity for the only individual in a position to require it. Just as in 1800, so in 1829, the opportunity of acting magnanimously towards the Roman Catholics was thrown away, and the Government incurred a heavy penalty for the ungenerosity of their supporters. O'Connell went back to Ireland a bitter demagogue. The Catholic Association had been dissolved, but its former committees met as "Aggregated Catholics," and voted £5000 from their accumulated funds for their hero's election expenses. He told the Clare electors that they had been insulted in his person; they, who had won the battle of religious liberty, must relax no effort till they had wrested political freedom from their oppressors and repealed the Union. The election went quietly enough, for no candidate put in an appearance against O'Connell; but his speeches set Ireland in a flame; Orangemen and Catholics fought battles in which many men lost their lives, ten being slain in a single encounter at Armagh.[1] A meeting of seventy magistrates at Thurles drew up a memorial to the Government, setting forth the impossibility of obtaining any evidence against murderers, and praying for extraordinary legislation to enable them to deal with disorder.[2]

Disorder in Ireland, 1829.

[1] The *Annual Register* rather lost its equilibrium in describing these frays. In Fermanagh, it states, a body of 800 Catholics attacked a Protestant party, "killed one man on the spot, and wounded seven others mortally, *three of whom afterwards died*" (*Ann. Reg.*, 1829, p. 130).

[2] *Annual Register* (Chronicle), 156.

Such were the first disappointing results of legislation intended to be conciliatory. Undoubtedly the torch that fired the train was the exclusion of O'Connell from Parliament upon a point of legal pedantry—ill-advised, ungenerous as we pronounce it now, with retrospective sagacity. Lord Eldon's most mournful anticipations seemed to be in a fair way of fulfilment.

Unhappily, the trouble was not confined to Ireland. The textile industries in Great Britain, silk-weaving especially, were in a very depressed state. The autumn of 1829 was dismal and wet, the harvest prospects deplorable;[1] landowners and farmers were cutting down expenditure; silk being one of the most obvious of luxuries, wages in that industry, as well as in others, fell to starvation point; many thousands of artisans were thrown out of work altogether, and the shopkeepers in poor districts, besides losing their customers, were "beggared by the rates."[2] The hand-loom weavers blamed machinery for their troubles, and took to the old Luddite game of smashing it up; manufacturers and machine-weavers traced their misfortunes to Huskisson's remission of the duty on silk in 1824, and called on the Government to restore the old prohibitive tariff. Huskisson and his friends being out of office, nobody suspected Wellington's cabinet of any affection for free trade. Great was the surprise and disgust, therefore, when Vesey Fitzgerald, President of the Board of Trade, resisted Mr. Tyler's motion for a committee to inquire into the state of the silk trade, remarking guilelessly that it "pointed at a return to the prohibitory system, which the Government

Distress and disorder in Great Britain, 1829.

[1] Eldon relates one instance in which one of his speeches in the House of Lords was interpreted more literally than he intended. Lady Goderich, deploring the ruin of the harvest by incessant rain, was answered by her maid: "Why, my lady, you know that Lord Eldon said if 'the Bill' passed, the sun of Great Britain was set for ever!" (Twiss, ii. 241.)

[2] Greville, ii. 161. In 1824–25 there were 17,000 looms employed in Spitalfields; in 1829 there were only 9000, the average wages having fallen from 17s. a week to 9s. In Congleton 26 mills had been closed and the average wages had fallen from 12s. 8d. to 4s. 7d. In Dublin the silk manufacture gave employment to 4390 hands in 1824, in 1828 to only 582. Similar returns came from Paisley, Macclesfield, Taunton, and Coventry. (*Annual Register*, 1829, p. 116.)

were determined not to restore."[1] On the contrary, he intended to reduce the duty on raw silk, an announcement which was followed by serious riots and destruction of property and machinery in many industrial centres.

Still, the country party, grievously as their allegiance had been shaken by the Emancipation Act, clung to the hope that some fiscal measures might be adopted to preserve native industries from the growing foreign competition. There was cold comfort for them in the King's speech at the opening of Parliament on 4th February 1830. "It would be most gratifying to the paternal feelings of his Majesty to be enabled to propose measures calculated to relieve the difficulties of any portion of his subjects"—but "you will concur with him in assigning due weight to the effect of unfavourable seasons, and to the operation of other causes which are beyond the reach of legislative control or remedy." No help from that quarter, it seems: why, murmured the Tories, should we exert ourselves to keep these people in office? And so little did they exert themselves that twice before 6th April Ministers suffered defeat on important questions in the House of Commons.

The first reverse took place on the old question of sinecures and superfluous offices, whereof some still remained, despite the purge that had been applied in 1818. Retrenchment was the order of the day; the army and navy estimates were each cut down by half a million, notwithstanding that Wellington had repeatedly warned his colleagues of the dangerously weak state of the national defences.[2] Among the civil offices doomed was that of Commissioner of the Navy, held by Mr. Dundas, son of the second Lord Melville, and that of Commissioner of the Victualling Department, held by Mr. Bathurst, Lord Bathurst's son. In accordance with the Treasury rule on abolition of office, it was proposed to award these gentlemen pensions of £500 and £400 a year respectively. Now Lord Bathurst, besides being President of the Council, also drew a salary of nearly £4000 a year as Teller of the

[1] *Hansard*, xxi. 744.

[2] See especially his memorandum to Lord Goderich in 1827 (*Civil Despatches*, iv. 106).

Exchequer; and Lord Melville, besides having been First Lord of the Admiralty for fifteen years, also received nearly £3000 a year as Keeper of the Privy Seal in Scotland. Neither of these subsidiary offices entailed any serious duties, yet it was not proposed to abolish them. Men could not forget the Admiralty scandals with which the first Lord Melville had been connected so disastrously to himself; the House of Commons, responding to the protest of Sir R. Heron against "these gentlemen, gorged with public money, requiring for their families, or even condescending to accept, such miserable pensions, and that, too, in a time of public distress," refused, by 139 to 121, to vote the money.

The Government met with their second defeat on Mr. Robert Grant's motion for leave to introduce a Bill removing the disabilities of the Jews, which was carried against Ministers by a majority of eighteen. They continued in office, partly owing to the precarious support which they received from the Opposition, partly, and chiefly, because of the continued disorganisation of that Opposition. The time of the Liberals was not yet, but it was not far off. Their leader, Mr. Tierney, died suddenly,[1] and Lord Althorp undertook the difficult task of holding together the "Men of the Mountain" and the "Malignants." The Parliament, not yet four years old, was nearing its end. George IV. still wanted two years of threescore and ten; it was only his constitution, originally of extraordinary vigour, that had carried him through a ruinous mode of life and counteracting prophylactics of appalling severity. He now lay a physical wreck at Windsor, unable even to scrawl his signature upon papers submitted to him by his Ministers. Parliament passed an Act authorising the sign-manual to be affixed by stamp. Unhappy king! still more unhappy country, whose kingship had sunk into such ignoble keeping! Daily, during that last illness, the Dean of Windsor read morning service in the dying man's bedroom, the King insisting upon his privilege, as head of the Church of England, of pronouncing the benediction upon the little company assembled. The locket of Mrs. Fitzherbert, his first love, was round his neck; Lady

Death of Robert Tierney, 25th Jan. 1830.

[1] The coroner's inquest is reported in *Ann. Reg.* (Chronicle), p. 13.

Conyngham, last of many mistresses, was beside his bed. The King, in his deadly weakness, had promised to make a will in Lady Conyngham's favour; the faithful creature took care that pen and ink should always be at his bedside; but the Duke of Wellington took equal care that these should not be applied to that purpose, and that will never was drawn.[1] The end came on 26th June. George IV., of all his dynasty the monarch of whom it is most charitable to speak least, passed beyond the sight of men; one is tempted to wish that he could have passed from their memory also. We of a later generation, who have never learnt to dissociate loyalty from personal esteem and affection for the sovereign, may ill realise the measure in which the burden of Ministers was increased by the character and habits of George IV.; and that at a time when the people of every nation had been roused to a sense of their own power and rights.

Last illness of George IV., June 1830.

Although Wellington had prevailed to bend King George to his will, it was by no means certain that he would find his successor equally pliable. William, Duke of Clarence, was the third son of George III., and was in his sixty-sixth year when he succeeded to the throne. An easy-going, good-tempered prince, he had won favour with a considerable section of the public by his unceremonious affability; though he had given some concern to others by his eccentricity and disregard of etiquette.[2] In domestic morals he was no better than his brothers, having four sons and five daughters by the actress Mrs. Jordan; but as he was exceedingly and uniformly kind to his mistress and their offspring, his tolerant subjects shrugged charitable shoulders and let it pass.[3] Like the other royal princes, William had set his

Accession of William IV., 26th June 1830.

[1] *Salisbury MSS.*

[2] A story went the rounds about this king to the effect that when, as Duke of Clarence, he met a brother admiral in Portsmouth, he slapped him on the shoulder, saying, "Ha! Admiral, they tell me you are the greatest rascal in Portsmouth." "I hope," was the reply, "that your Royal Highness has not come to take away my character!"

[3] In the year after his accession William IV. bestowed one of his own titles, Earl of Munster, upon the eldest Fitzclarence, and conferred upon the other sons and daughters the rank of a marquess's children.

house hastily in order when the succession was thrown open by the death of Princess Charlotte of Wales in 1817, and married, in 1818, Adelaide, daughter of the Duke of Saxe-Coburg-Meiningen, by whom he had no children. On the whole, his accession was well received, his popularity being in some degree enhanced by contrast with public feeling towards the late sovereign. Moreover, King William was a sailor, having seen much active service—notably in Rodney's fleet at Cape St. Vincent—and British hearts have ever a warm side to the Royal Navy.

Wellington, however, had little reason to look for favour with the new King. Barely two years before, he had been compelled, as Prime Minister, to take the Duke of Clarence sharply to task for serious irregularity in discharging the office of Lord High Admiral, and to reprimand him in terms which led to his Royal Highness resigning the appointment.[1] But King William displayed a royal magnanimity, consigning the past to oblivion and desiring his brother's Ministers to continue in office.

In the other ordeal which the Government had to face as preliminary to a new reign—a general election—they did not fare so well. Several Tory magnates showed their displeasure with Wellington and Peel—especially Peel—by returning Opposition members. Altogether, the Government returned from the country with the loss of about fifty seats. Catholic emancipation, its disappointing effect in pacifying Ireland, and the refusal of Ministers to revert to a strictly protective tariff, contributed largely to this result; but more permanent forces were at work also. A hurricane was blowing on the Continent, which sent its tremors through the length and breadth of the United Kingdom.

The French Revolution of July 1830.

Towards the close of Louis XVIII.'s reign, his brother, the Comte d'Artois, heir to the throne, had acquired great power, which he used to curtail the constitutional rights secured under the charter of 1814, and to restore the old Bourbon autocracy. King Louis died in 1824; d'Artois succeeded as Charles X., and his brief reign was an incessant raid upon popular

[1] Wellington's *Civil Despatches*, iv. 576–596.

rights. In 1829 he dismissed his ministry because they would not accept his absolutist views, and appointed the Prince de Polignac to form another, which was presently in conflict with the elective Chamber. Blind to the lessons of his youth, King Charles attempted a *coup d'état* on 25th July, dismissing the Chamber, muzzling the press, and, by altering the system of election, securing absolute power to the Crown. Two days later broke out the Revolution of July; the regiments employed to quell it fraternised with the people, and on 2nd August Charles was forced to abdicate and seek shelter in England, that asylum for outcasts of every race and grade.[1] A week later, Louis Philippe, son of Philippe Égalité, was proclaimed king, not of France, but of the French; to rule, not by right divine, but by the will of the people, whose national flag henceforth should be, not the lily-spangled banner, but the tricolor.

These events had their beginning during the first week of the English elections. The successful revolt against autocracy in France, followed by the revolution of 25th August in Brussels, roused the ardour of the reform party in Great Britain and quickened the rising tide against the Government. For Wellington, it was well known, had been the principal agent in the restoration of the Bourbons; not so well known were the restraint he had exerted upon the legitimists before the restoration,[2] and the control he had placed upon Louis XVIII. after that event.[3] Wellington was held accountable for Charles X.'s extravagant pretensions; nay, it was said that Polignac had been appointed Minister at his express instance, and Liberal candidates bade the electors behold in Wellington the British Polignac—the implacable foe of popular aspirations.

He who had been the people's idol was about to become

[1] Where he died in 1836.

[2] Wellington's *Despatches*, xi. 584.

[3] The story runs that when Paris was occupied in 1815 by the allies, some of Napoleon's generals who had become ultra-royalists resented the Duke's moderation so much as to turn their backs upon him at Court. King Louis, observing it, offered some kind of apology for their rudeness. "O sire," replied the Duke, "ils sont si accoutumés à me tourner le dos, qu'ils n'en ont pas encore perdu l'habitude."

the object of their execration. Yet it were unjust to view this change as a fresh example of the proverbial fickleness of Demos, or as the ingratitude of a nation towards its greatest captain. Wellington, by force of circumstances, had transferred his energies from the camp and field of war to the Council Chamber and Legislature. He refused to believe in the depth and genuineness of the reform movement; not until he had been driven from the field did he realise that, so far from its being a mere piece of party strategy, it was supported by the passionate resolve of the mass of his fellow-countrymen. Pitt, we may be sure, would have read the auspices aright, and have gone heartily into the work of broadening the base of authority; but to Wellington and Peel, democracy had no aspect but that of dread—dread, not only for the privileges and possessions of a class, but honest, unselfish dread also for the stability of the Empire, the throne, and property in general.[1] Collision between men holding such opinions and a nation which had made up its mind to govern itself was inevitable; and the nation is not to be blamed for showing dislike to the rulers who opposed its will.

That will had been many years in the making; the circumstances of 1830 hastened it to maturity. A movement took its rise in Birmingham early in the year for the repeal of the Act of 1819 establishing cash payments, a purely technical grievance which the general body of the people could very little understand. But the meetings held for this object brought into relief the far more intel-

[1] Even such a liberal thinker as Huskisson protested against "a measure founded upon the principle of a general revision, reconstruction, and remodelling of our present constitution. . . . While I have a seat in this House I shall give it my most decided opposition. If such an extensive reform were effected, we might go on for two or three sessions in good and easy times, and such a reformed Parliament might adapt itself to our mode of government, or the ordinary concerns of the country; but if such an extensive change were effected in the constitution of Parliament, sure I am, whenever an occasion shall arise of great popular excitement or reaction, the consequence will be a total subversion of our constitution, followed by anarchy and confusion, and terminating either in the tyranny of a fierce democracy, or a military despotism. . . . Taking it as a whole . . . I am opposed to any material change in our present system." (Speech on Lord John Russell's motion for the enfranchisement of Leeds, Manchester, and Birmingham, 23rd February 1830.)

ligible grievance that Birmingham, like Manchester, Leeds, and Sheffield, had no representative in Parliament. It was not difficult for a few ardent reformers to organise the movement into the Birmingham Political Union, with aims far beyond mere questions of the currency. Under the leadership of Thomas Attwood, this body soon attained such dimensions as led Huskisson to warn the House of Commons that it differed in no respect, except in object, from the Catholic Association which they had deemed it necessary to suppress.[1] The Birmingham Union became a powerful organisation to force on parliamentary reform. Similar associations were formed in other populous centres; the distress prevailing in the agricultural districts made it easy for agitators to obtain a hearing there, although the discontent of farm labourers manifested itself chiefly in the crude form of burning stackyards and smashing machinery.

Wellington, though fatally misreading the signs of the times, was under no illusion as to the effect of the elections in weakening his administration. Even before the dissolution, on 30th June, he had told Peel that he earnestly wished to take the opportunity of the King's death to retire, and that although he himself could not sit again in a Cabinet with Huskisson, Palmerston, and C. Grant, he would support heartily any Government which Peel might form.[2] Peel managed to overrule the Duke's objection to serve with the Canningites; overtures were opened with Palmerston in July; but Palmerston would not come in without Lord Grey and the Whigs, demanding "a considerable change both of measures and men."[3] This meant the reform of Parliament, upon which Peel was as inflexible as Wellington. Then came the general election. Before the result of that was fully known, Huskisson was no more. The Manchester and Liverpool Railway, feeble forerunner of that stupendous system which was about to revolutionise the world, was to be opened by the Duke of Wellington on 15th September. Huskisson, as member for Liverpool, attended the ceremony, and left his train at Parkside Bridge in

Opening of the Manchester Railway, 15th Sept. 1830.

[1] *Hansard*, xxii. 347. [2] Wellington's *Civil Despatches*, vii. 108.
[3] *Salisbury MSS.*, 1832.

order to pay his respects to the Prime Minister, with whom he had held no intercourse since their quarrel. The two gentlemen were in the act of shaking hands, when the locomotive *Rocket* approached upon another line of rails. Huskisson got confused, fell under the engine, and received injuries of which he died that night.

When the returns of the new Parliament were complete it was clear that the Ministry could not carry on without some rearrangement of parties. Poor Huskisson, Wellington's chief bugbear, was gone; the Canningites, never imagining that the two Ministers who had swallowed the camel of Catholic Emancipation would strain at the gnat of a moderate measure of reform, were the first to reopen negotiations. Mr. Littleton[1] came to the Duke's confidential friend, Arbuthnot, on the subject, and Arbuthnot wrote to Peel on 1st November:—

"Upon the subject of Parliamentary Reform the whole difficulty would turn. He (Mr. Littleton) could hardly suppose that the Duke of Wellington was not aware that the general sense of the country was now in favour of a moderate Reform. . . . He had been commissioned by Lady Stafford to say to the Duke of Wellington that unless a moderate Parliamentary Reform was intended by the Government, Lord Stafford and all belonging to him must go into opposition."[2]

The Angel of Peace was beckoning Ministers along an easy road to a settlement; they mistook him for the Spirit of Anarchy luring them to revolution. No trace remains of written reply to Littleton's friendly overture. The answer was blurted across the table of the House of Lords next day by the Prime Minister, in reply to Lord Grey's complaint that there was no reference to reform in the King's speech:—

Wellington declares against Reform, 2nd Nov. 1830.

"I do not hesitate to declare unequivocally what my sentiments are. I am fully convinced that the country already possesses a legislature which answers all the purposes of good legislation. . . . I am not only not prepared to bring in any measure of the description alluded to by the noble lord, but I will at once declare that, as far

[1] Created Lord Hatherton in 1835. Not to be confused with the family of Lyttelton, Viscount Cobham.

[2] *Peel Letters*, ii. 163.

as I am concerned, as long as I hold any station in the Government of the country, I shall always feel it my duty to resist such measures when proposed by others."

"I have not said too much, have I?" said the Duke to Lord Aberdeen as he sat down.

"You'll hear of it!" was the prophetic reply.

It was the first low roar of thunder, heralding the coming tempest. Prudent citizens began to take measures for their security. The three-per-cents., which at the beginning of the year stood at the fine price of 94½, but had declined to 84 in sympathy with political convulsion in France and Belgium, now dropped to 80. Wellington, Lyndhurst, and Peel, still incredulous of the breadth and depth of the popular current, perceived that they must prepare to deal with mob violence. The Prime Minister was the last man to be driven from his purpose by intimidation, but the person of the Sovereign must not be exposed to insult. The King and Queen were to dine at the annual banquet in the Guildhall on 9th November, and the Radicals were to make it the occasion for a formidable demonstration. Thousands of handbills of sanguinary sentiment were distributed broadcast, calling upon the citizens to assemble *with arms* on the route. Sir Robert Peel's Act had established a metropolitan police force in the preceding year; these "Peelers" or "Bobbies," as they were dubbed eponymously, had already proved themselves too useful and effective not to have incurred the hatred of the roughs: it was feared that their mere presence in the streets might be the occasion of bloodshed. On the 7th—only two days before the banquet—the Lord Mayor-elect wrote to the Prime Minister advising him that their Majesties should not move without a strong escort. Wellington laid the letter before the cabinet; were the street scenes of Paris and Brussels a few weeks before to be re-enacted in the Strand and Cheapside? Better avoid risk of a disturbance, and postpone the royal visit to the City till quieter times. So Ministers decided, and filled up the cup of their unpopularity. Consols tumbled down to 77½. Loyal folks who had been busy decorating their

Royal visit to the City postponed, 7th Nov. 1830.

houses now hastened to barricade them and lay in ammunition. Ministers, they thought, would never have taken such a grave step unless they had sure information that there was danger.

After all, there was no riot. Some of the police were roughly handled by the mob; but, on the whole, the day passed quietly. Then came the reaction. People did not pause to ask whether the absence of the King, the Queen, and the Ministers had averted the danger; they simply felt that they had been needlessly disappointed of a gala day, and they vented their displeasure upon the Government. For the first time in his life Wellington became the butt of ridicule. His brother, Lord Wellesley, declared that the postponement of the royal visit to the City was "the boldest act of cowardice" he had ever known, and people laughed at Ministers as the dupes of a timid Lord Mayor.

This put the finishing stroke to the administration. Members had been strenuously whipped up for a full-dress debate on Brougham's Reform resolution, fixed for 16th November. The House would not wait so long for revenge. On the 15th the Government were left in a minority of 29—204 to 233—on Sir Henry Parnell's motion to reduce the new Civil List. Radicals, Canningites, and Tories crowded the Opposition lobby; even the Duke's nephew, Wellesley Pole,[1] went with them. Next day Ministers laid their resignation before the King.

Fall of Wellington, 15th Nov. 1830.

Thus ended Wellington's first and last administration.

"If I had known in January 1828," he wrote to Sir William Knighton, "one tithe of what I do now, and of what I discovered in one month after I was in office, I should never have been the King's Minister and should have avoided loads of misery. . . . I believe there never was a man suffered so much and for so little purpose."[2]

Much of this suffering was the result of the Duke's long training as a soldier—"a bad education," observed Sir Walter Scott, "for a statesman in a free country."[3]

[1] Succeeded as 4th Earl of Mornington in 1845.
[2] Wellington's *Civil Despatches*, vi. 294.
[3] Scott's *Journal*, 8th Oct. 1826.

Wellington's administration lasted two years and ten months. In that time he broke up his party twice. On Catholic Emancipation a split was necessary—inevitable; but his dismissal of Huskisson and the Canningites (for it was virtually dismissal) was a bad blunder, easy to avoid by the customary give-and-take of party management. Talking confidentially to Lady Salisbury, he made no secret of his sense of unfitness. "One man wants one thing and one another; they agree to what I say in the morning, and then in the evening, up they start with some crotchet which deranges the whole plan. I have not been used to that in all the early part of my life. I have been accustomed to carry on things in quite a different manner. I assembled my officers and laid down my plan, and it was carried into effect without any more words."[1] On terms such as these the life of no administration would be worth a week's purchase; but in balancing the Duke's account as a statesman, let it stand on the credit side that no man of less masterful character could have carried with him George IV. and Sir Robert Peel on the Roman Catholic question.

The stormy years following the fall of the Wellington Ministry have a literature even more voluminous than that devoted to England's share in the Napoleonic wars. Even as the very existence of our nation was staked in the Peninsular campaign, so the conflict of reform involved in its issue the fate and future of the chief institutions of the country. It requires but moderate acquaintance with the correspondence of public men at that period to prove the serious conviction entertained by the Tory party that it was only a question of how many years private property, the Church, the House of Lords, and the Monarchy itself would outlast the election of the House of Commons upon a liberal franchise. Many of the Reformers themselves considered that a republican form of government would be the outcome of the change—undesirable, hazardous, but inevitable. History contained no example of a democratic monarchy; the nearest approach to it was the existing constitution of England. With no period of our annals is the average Englishman better acquainted than with the

[1] *Salisbury MSS.*, 1835.

years 1831–32. Synthetic treatment will suffice for them here, so amply have contemporary memoirs and periodicals furnished details.

Lord Grey forms a Cabinet, Nov. 1830.

The King laid his commands upon Lord Grey, who would fain have had Lord Althorp undertake the task of forming a Ministry. Grey's youth lay far behind him; it was a changed world since he had championed the cause of Reform with the generous ardour of nine-and-twenty. His public career had been a remarkable one. Although it was forty-four years since he entered Parliament, and although he had been titular leader of the Whig party for seven-and-twenty of those years, he had held office only during the fourteen months of "All the Talents." He was now sixty-six, and it entailed no small sacrifice of elderly ease to buckle on the unaccustomed harness. But he obeyed the summons, collecting round him a "broad-bottom" Cabinet, which drew the Duke of Richmond, Goderich, Melbourne, Palmerston, and Charles Grant from the Canningite ranks, Lansdowne and Holland from the Whigs, Lord Durham and Sir James Graham from the Radicals. In the Ministry, but outside the Cabinet, were two future Prime Ministers—Lord John Russell and Edward Stanley, afterwards 14th Earl of Derby—the "Rupert of debate." Brougham was a difficulty; nobody trusted him, yet no Whig Premier could afford to affront him—so terrible was the power of that tongue. He wanted to be Master of the Rolls, but neither the King nor Lord Grey would give him an independent office, which would leave him in the House of Commons, a perpetual menace to the Ministry. So they muzzled him by making him Lord Chancellor, with the title of Lord Brougham and Vaux—*Vaux et præterea nihil*, quoth the wags.

Coercive measures against rioters, Dec. 1830.

The first act of the new Ministers cannot have been decided upon without some qualms of conscience. The very men who, time after time, had cried out against the Tories for repressing disorder by force and special legislation, were compelled to adopt extraordinary measures for the same purpose. Those who had ridiculed the Duke of Wellington's

solicitude for the safety of the Sovereign in the month of November, made acknowledgment of the extent of the danger in December by the appointment of a special commission to try rioters in the southern agricultural counties. The commissioners opened proceedings at Winchester on 18th December by trying no fewer than 270 prisoners, of whom fourteen were sentenced to death.[1] Before they finished their tour one thousand persons had stood their trial before them. An ironical fate decreed that during the year 1831, hailed as the first in the era of liberty, 1601 persons should have been condemned to hanging in England. As if to make the irony more complete, just as the Tory Government had undertaken the prosecution of Watson and Thistlewood for inciting the Spa Fields rioters in 1817, and failed to obtain a conviction, so now the Liberal Government caused Cobbett and Carlile to be arraigned as chief instigators to riot and crime. Carlile was convicted, ordered to pay a fine of £2000 and to be imprisoned for two years; but in Cobbett's case the jury, being unable to agree on a verdict, were discharged. The writer who reproaches Lord Liverpool's Government for not disregarding "the foolish clamour of a few mischief-makers," and who declares that "the circumstances of the country in 1817 afforded no excuse for arbitrary measures,"[2] has no rebuke for Lord Grey's Government when, under similar circumstances, it had recourse to precisely similar measures. "The labouring classes," we are informed, "aroused to a consciousness of their folly by these proceedings [of the Special Commission] gradually abstained from outrages which they found themselves unable to commit with impunity."[3] "Folly" and "arbitrary measures," then, are the terms applicable to the attempt of Tory Ministers to cope with disorder; but "folly" and "outrage" best describe the conduct of the labouring classes when they give trouble to good Liberals.

Advocating a measure while in Opposition and framing

[1] *Annual Register*, 1830, p. 201. Under the law as it then stood, arson was a capital offence.

[2] Walpole's *England*, i. 432.

[3] Ibid., ii. 627.

it when in office are two very different things, and Grey soon found that every member of his Cabinet was wedded to a different scheme of parliamentary reform. He got them to agree to the appointment of a small committee who should work out a digestible measure. Lord John Russell, Lord Duncannon, members of the Cabinet, Sir J. Graham and Lord Durham, undertook the task; and a Bill founded upon their recommendations was introduced on 21st March by Russell, brother of the Duke of Bedford, a typical boroughmonger. It proposed to release 167 seats by disfranchising 60 boroughs of less than 2000 inhabitants, returning 119 members; by taking one member from every borough with less than 4000 inhabitants which returned two members; and two members from Weymouth, which was represented in Parliament by four legislators. Forty-four of these seats were to go to great towns hitherto unrepresented, five more to Scotland, five to Ireland, one to Wales, and 55 to the English counties. The county franchise was to be given to £50 leaseholders and £10 freeholders, and the borough franchise was fixed at £10. Tory members, whose votes had turned out their own Government, listened with lengthening faces to the noble lord as he expounded the sweeping provisions of his Bill. When he read out the long list of boroughs to be extinguished the consternation was not confined to one side of the House, for there were as many rotten boroughs in Whig pockets as in Tory. No reform, this: 'tis revolution! But out of doors enthusiasm for the Bill mounted very high.

The House of Commons, ready, on the whole, for moderate reform, allowed Lord John's Bill a first reading without a division, after seven nights' debate. This was on 1st March: three weeks later, notwithstanding tumultuous approval of the measure in the country, the second reading was carried only by a single vote in a very full House—302 to 301. Done with that! chuckled the Tories, though the longer heads among them had misgivings. The Bill was slain on 19th April upon General Gascoyne's resolution on going into Committee. This precipitated matters. The King consented to Grey's request for a dissolution; but first the

The First Reform Bill, 1831.

necessary supply must be voted, and this the Opposition refused, carrying a motion for adjournment by a majority of 22. Parliament therefore was prorogued on 22nd April by the King in person; had it been done by commission, as would have been expedient in respect of his Majesty's indifferent health, nothing could have stopped an awkward motion by Lord Wharncliffe, praying the King not to dissolve the Parliament. Lord Wharncliffe was on his legs endeavouring to get a hearing amid tumult such as has seldom been witnessed in the Upper Chamber, when King William came to the door, half-inclined to turn back, so great was the din. It was hushed at his entrance, and the royal speech announced the prorogation with a view to dissolution, "for the purpose of ascertaining the sense of my people."

The reply from the people had no tinge of ambiguity. That was manifest before a single vote was cast at the polls. Demos beheld in the dissolution the hammer that should strike off his fetters, and decreed that all men should manifest rejoicing. Those who would not do so—who would not illuminate their houses on 27th April—should have their windows smashed. None less likely than Wellington to obey this bidding; sure enough, Apsley House showed never a glimmer that night. A few of the new police were on duty there, all too few to control the triumphant mob, and stones began to crash through the windows. But the mob was English, therefore not unkindly. When the rioters heard that the Duchess of Wellington had died on the 25th and that her body lay within the dark pile, they held their hands, and moved off to vent their feelings upon Lord Londonderry's casements in Park Lane.

In the provinces, feeling ran at least as high as in London, and the disorders usual at elections conducted at hustings and by open voting were greatly aggravated. The populace were in deadly earnest. In most constituencies, especially in Scotland, it required no small measure of physical courage to carry an anti-Reform candidate through the ordeal.

The new Parliament was opened by the King on 21st June. Three days later Lord John Russell introduced a

Reform Bill practically identical with that which had been lost. The former measure had passed a second reading by a majority of one vote; its successor was read a second time, on 8th July, by 367 to 231 votes. The committee stage occupied forty sittings; not till 21st September did the Bill leave the House of Commons. The second reading was fixed for 3rd October in the House of Lords. The Duke of Wellington was still paramount in that chamber; he disbelieved in the genuine force behind the cry for Reform; even had he realised it, his was not a spirit to yield to intimidation. "I am convinced," he wrote to Mr. Gleig, "that any Reform of Parliament upon the principle of this Bill will destroy this great country. No evil can arise from the rejection of the Bill at all equal to that which will arise from carrying it." Therefore he decreed its rejection; and rejected it was, at 6 A.M. on 8th October, by 199 votes to 158.

The Second Reform Bill, June 1831.

Rioting broke out immediately in various places in the country, restrained by the firmness of the magistrates and the presence of troops in most places, but triumphant during three days in Bristol, where the mob burnt the Mansion House and Bishop's Palace, wrecking and plundering a great deal of private property. At Nottingham the ancient castle, residence of the Duke of Newcastle, was gutted by fire; a silk mill was burnt down, but further mischief was averted by the arrival of cavalry. In many places peers who had voted against the Bill had to ride for their lives; but, on the whole, the winter passed with fewer calamities than might have occurred in a less stable community.

If the masses were in earnest about Reform, so were Ministers. Parliament, prorogued on 20th October, reassembled on 6th December. On the 12th Lord John Russell brought in his Third Reform Bill, differing slightly from its predecessors in the precise boroughs to be disfranchised. Fifty-six boroughs, returning 111 members, were wholly doomed; each of thirty others was to lose one of its representatives. But the total number of 658, which it had been proposed in the former Bills to reduce, was left intact.

The Third Reform Bill, Dec. 1831.

The Commons having passed the second reading by a majority of two to one, Parliament adjourned for Christmas, and met again for stern business on 17th January. The Commons sent up the Bill to the Lords on 26th March, all the omens being unfavourable. The Iron Duke still ruled his peers, and remained obdurate. "If we take the Bill, or even give improvements of it, you may rely upon it that neither Lord Grey nor any nobleman of his order, nor any gentleman of his caste, will govern the country six weeks after the reformed Parliament will meet, and that the race of English gentlemen will not last long afterwards. That is my sincere opinion."[1]

It was well that among the Tory peers were some with truer perception of the real nature of the crisis. The Lords Wharncliffe and Harrowby had received, and responded to, overtures from Lord Grey for a compromise; they represented others—some timely sagacious, some fearful of the consequences of further resistance, some apprehensive lest their degree should be brought into contempt by the creation of a number of new peers. "The Waverers," they were dubbed by robust Tories, and they sufficed to give Ministers a majority of nine on the second reading—margin all too narrow to furnish the driving power necessary for the committee stage. That was evident at once. Lord Lyndhurst's amendment, postponing the disfranchising clauses, left Ministers in a minority of thirty-five. Straightway Grey advised the King to create new peers to ensure a majority, a measure to which his Majesty had consented in the previous autumn.

But if King William's favour for the Bill had not cooled in the interval, his confidence in Grey had waned, owing to certain points in foreign policy. He declined his Minister's advice, accepted his resignation, and sent for Lord Lyndhurst to consult with. Lyndhurst advised the King to lay his commands upon one who should be willing to carry a moderate measure of Reform. Moderate it may not be, was the tenor of the King's reply, for my honour is com-

The Grey Cabinet resigns, 9th May 1832.

[1] Wellington's *Civil Despatches*, viii. 110.

mitted to a full measure; and off went Lyndhurst to try the Duke of Wellington. No help there, one should say, remembering the duke's dictum a few months before—"All reform is in my opinion bad and dangerous, and every reform would end by being Radical."[1] But Wellington was no fool. He recognised that some measure of reform could no longer be averted; better one framed by tender Tory hands than by the adversary. Moreover, "the King's Government must be carried on." Wellington, therefore, was willing; not so Peel, to whom Lyndhurst next applied.

"I foresee," wrote Peel to Croker, "that a Bill of Reform, including everything that is really important and really dangerous in the present Bill, must pass. For me individually to take the conduct of such a Bill, to assume the responsibility of the consequences which I have predicted as the inevitable result of such a Bill, would be, in my opinion, personal degradation to myself. . . . I look beyond the exigency and peril of the present moment, and I do believe that one of the greatest calamities that could befall the country would be the utter want of confidence in the declarations of public men which must follow the adoption of a Bill of Reform by me as a Minister of the Crown. It is *not* a repetition of the Catholic question. I was then in office. I had advised the concession as a Minister. I should now assume office for the purpose of carrying the measure to which, up to the last moment, I have been inveterately opposed."[2]

Undeterred by these searching arguments, the duke spent some days casting about for a possible leader of the House of Commons, which meanwhile had voted confidence in the old Ministry by a majority of eighty. The quest was hopeless—dangerously near a farce. On 15th May Wellington advised the King to recall Lord Grey, who declined to resume office without "sufficient security" that the Bill should pass. Such security could only be had either through swamping the Tory majority by the creation of new peers, or through that majority laying down their arms.

Posterity has not accorded an exalted place to William IV.

[1] Letter to Lord Salisbury, January 1831. *Hatfield MSS.*
[2] *Peel Letters*, ii. 205.

the roll of British monarchs, but he had a fair measure of sagacity and knew his Wellington well. That knowledge he now employed to extricate the legislature from a dangerous *impasse*. He caused his secretary to write a circular letter to the Tory peers acquainting them that the dilemma might be solved by a declaration in the House of Lords that a sufficient number of them would drop further opposition to the Bill.[1] The King knew that Wellington would take this as a command, and so he did. "Right about face, my lords! Quick march!" was the word, obeyed by all but thirty or forty of the Duke's forces,[2] and Lord Grey resumed the work of government.

Recall of Lord Grey. The Reform Bill passed.

The remaining stages of the Reform Bill were swift and smooth.[3] It received the royal assent on 7th June.

A tremendous crisis was over; a new constitutional era had been inaugurated; radiant with promise, as many believed; overcast, as others were convinced, with impenetrable gloom. The hope—the faith—of Reformers has been justified by the experience of two generations. Wealth and welfare has increased in the community, while the Empire has waxed in dignity and power. Yet some will still reflect that seventy-five years fill but a small space in the life of a nation, and that forces were released in 1832 whereof the ultimate effect lies beyond living ken. *Quo tendis?* is a question ever present to thoughtful minds, but the answer must remain on the knees of the gods until the time appointed.

This much every man must admit, no matter how fondly he clings to the ancient form of governance, that Reform had not only become an imperious necessity, but

[1] Sir Spencer Walpole (vol. ii. p. 679) mentions this as a letter to the Duke of Wellington, but the circular is printed in the *Annual Register*, 1832, p. 187.

[2] It was generally understood that, should this expedient fail, Lord Grey had extracted from the King a reluctant promise to create enough new peers to pass the Bill.

[3] On the third reading in the House of Lords the numbers in the division were: Contents, 106; Not Content, 22.

it was an ethical obligation. No honest defence could be maintained for a dishonest system—a system which, professedly representative, had become flagrantly nominee. Whatsoever and how great soever may be the risks under an elective system based upon bare majorities, it is at least free from the evil inseparable from a Sham.

END OF VOL. I

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